

SPECIAL 20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

November 25-December 8, 1996

IN THESE TIMES

FOR A FEW DOLLARS MORE

**How Clinton
is buying off
environmental
outlaws
out West.**

**Jeffrey St. Clair and
Alexander Cockburn
report**

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EDITORIAL

THE LEFT MUST ESTABLISH ITS OWN IDENTITY

In the wake of the November elections, two statistics stand out: Candidates and their supporters spent more money in this campaign season than ever before—an estimated total of \$1.6 billion (\$800 million on the presidential campaigns, and a similar amount on congressional races). And more than half of those eligible to vote stayed home. Not since 1924, when Calvin Coolidge beat conservative Democrat John W. Davis in a three-way race with Progressive Sen. Robert M. La Follette, has such a small percentage of the electorate turned out for a presidential race.

Every four years since we began publishing in 1976, we have commented on the low turnout in presidential elections. In mantra-like style, we have attributed this to the refusal of major party candidates to address, in anything but the most superficial and demagogic manner, the core social problems facing our nation. This year was no exception. Bob Dole attacked his opponent's character, while desperately espousing jerry-built campaign promises that few took seriously. And Clinton barraged us with equally superficial, scattershot proposals. In short, neither candidate gave working people much incentive to vote. Not surprisingly, people got the message and stayed home.

When the candidates represent those who are most satisfied with things as they are, turnout tends to be low. This election fits the pattern, despite efforts by the Christian Coalition on the right and by labor on the left to mobilize their constituencies. Neither group was able to galvanize the electorate, though for different reasons. The Christian Coalition could not because its social issues have a strictly limited appeal, as Dole, who avoided them like the plague, understood. Labor could not because few of the candidates it supported truly represented working people's interests. Thus in its attempt to elect a Democratic House, labor had to resort to essentially negative campaigning. It spent \$35 million on a series of TV ads that attacked Republican freshmen as Gingrich clones. For those already cynical or disillusioned about electoral politics, these ads offered little to inspire participation.

To make matters worse, many Democratic candidates for

Congress tended to follow Clinton's lead. Playing down their substantive differences with the Republicans, they resorted either to scare tactics about Republican "extremists" or to campaigning on marginal issues such as handgun control and tuition tax credits.

Many on the left, especially African-Americans and trade unionists, understood that the task at hand was to prevent a Republican administration from taking office. The result, however, is that the White House is now calling the election a mandate to continue on course. As the President said just after the election, "we understand that the American people want us to work with the Republicans, and that we have to build a vital center" (the term Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. invented to promote '60s Cold War liberalism). In short, the electorate voted to prevent a Republican victory, but that is precisely what Clinton now plans to give us.

But, of course, this election was not a mandate for anything. More than half the electorate didn't vote, and a substantial portion of those who voted Democratic did so reluctantly, supporting Clinton and Democratic congressional candidates only to prevent their

more conservative opponents from winning.

If the American people told their current leaders anything, it was that they are fed up with the political status quo. Which brings us back to the point Jesse Jackson made in his speech to the Democratic National Convention in August: The important thing is not what Clinton now says he will do, but what we do to create a left capable of chal-

Until the left develops a distinct politics of its own, it will remain marginal.

lenging the bipartisan pro-corporate principles that dominate American political life. In other words, to avoid even further drift to the right, the left must begin to develop and espouse independent politics.

The core principle of such a politics must be social control of corporate behavior, and a meaningful democracy in which people count as much as money. There is widespread support for these principles: Universal quality health care is favored over a health system run for the benefit of giant insurance companies. Strong environmental protection is more popular than "cost-effective" loopholes for corporate polluters. A living minimum wage is preferred to poverty wages and degrading welfare. The task of the left is to develop these principles into practical legislative proposals and electoral platforms, and then to field its own candidates in whatever venues are available. ◀

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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InTHESETIMES

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LETTERS

Read the book

I have rarely responded to reviews of my books, since I view them as basically subjective. But Heather Zwicker's recent review of *Too Queer: Essays from a Radical Life* (September 30) was so savage, misleading and simply inept as to demand a response.

Several problems obtain: First, the reviewer appears not to have read the whole book; not a single essay from the latter two-thirds is mentioned, even as an overview. Evidently, once Zwicker determined the book was serious, she stopped reading. There is no mention of the book's central theme: illness. She doesn't make a single reference in her review to breast cancer, AIDS, suicide or chronic illness in the queer community. Two-thirds of the essays are about these issues (for which I was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in commentary).

Second, Zwicker complains that I

didn't write the book she wanted to read, that I "missed the point" of *my own life* by not doing a campy rendering of it. "Didn't she ever do a political action just to get the girl?" she asks. She sneers at my politics because they are not hers; she dismisses my arguments because they don't jive with her personal experience. When she misunderstands my essay on marriage, which she calls "inane," I find myself wondering if she reads the news. She dismisses my argument that marriage is a heterosexual construct predicated historically—and in many countries today—on the bartering of women as if these are not facts of women's lives. She must have also missed the Defense of Marriage Act recently passed by Congress, which underscores my argument.

Zwicker's is the only bad review the book has received, but that is not my objection. Rather, I am disturbed that a writer for a progressive publication

like *In These Times* would fail to understand that "leading a life of personal integrity" is a goal to strive for, not an ethos to be denigrated with smug cynicism. I believe your readers understand that queer experience is not monolithic, something your reviewer apparently does not. *Too Queer* isn't a fun read like *Girls Next Door*; it isn't meant to be. Nevertheless, I think your readers would find it provocative, and I hope they will not be steered away by the sophism of your review.

Victoria Brownworth
Philadelphia

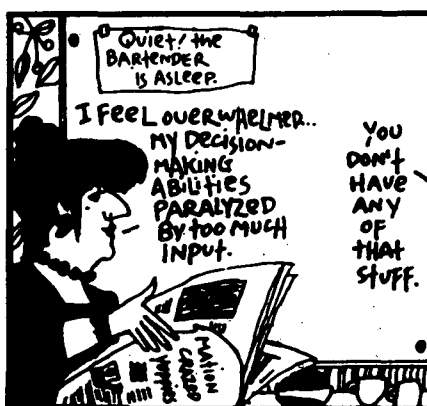
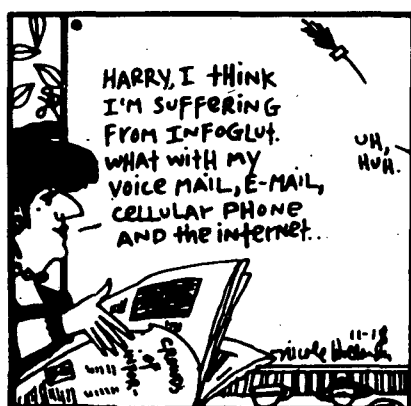
Disappointed

As a fervent supporter of the Middle East peace process and the two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians, I must express my disappointment at your publication's usual attitude toward the recently defeated Israeli government. A recent case in point is Stephen Siegel's "Reaping what you sow" (October 14).

If it had been a Meretz-Labor government instead—with Meretz the senior rather than the junior partner—the transgressions Siegel writes of in the territories would have been far fewer. The terrible events of the past year—Rabin's assassination, the suicide bombings and the defeat of the Peres government—should emphasize how very difficult it is to make this peace which presumably we all desire. Even the more drawn-out negotiating

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



stance, more punitive security policies and less conciliatory postures favored by Labor (as opposed to Meretz) could not win the support of an Israeli electorate newly traumatized by extremist Islamic terror.

Despite Siegel's cynicism, the Rabin-Peres government was moving toward a reasonable compromise under very difficult circumstances. Siegel's use of that Likud Minister's 40 percent figure for the growth of Jewish settlers in the territories during the Rabin-Peres years is a curious one. Apart from Jewish expansion in new neighborhoods in Jerusalem (moves opposed by the mainstream Israeli peace movement as exemplified by Meretz), the population of Jewish towns in the territories increased from about 120,000 to 145,000, virtually a natural increase over four years for a population of disproportionately young couples and large families.

And despite the continuing hardships inflicted upon the Palestinians, profound political progress has occurred: the establishment of the first Palestinian Arab government, the first Palestinian national elections, the liberation of a majority of Palestinians in the territories from Israeli military occupation, and the still intact Oslo negotiating framework, which has now ensconced even Likud ministers and officials in direct dialogue with the PLO. Who would have predicted any of these as few as five years ago?

Ralph Seliger

Consulting editor and past editor-in-chief
Israel Horizons
New York

We told you so

It's hard to discern the "peace process" as Israeli helicopter gunships blast away at Palestinian protesters and a new intifada erupts. After the opening of the tunnel, the International Center for Peace in the Middle East provided the following background information: "In the past few weeks, Israeli settler groups have been entering new homes purchased stealthily in East Jerusalem, with the assistance of

hired security and the police. [Jerusalem Mayor] Ehud Olmert sent city inspectors to the Muslim section of the Temple Mount to paste notices of illegal construction on improvements to the Muslim holy places. In August, a center for the handicapped was demolished by Mayor Olmert because it 'represented a Palestinian attempt to exercise sovereignty in East Jerusalem.' Ministry of Interior officials have been taking residency away from over a thousand Palestinians, thus taking away their right to live and work in Jerusalem, even if they were born there. ... The Oslo Accords specifically call upon both parties to refrain from making permanent changes of facts on the ground in preparation for final status negotiations, which will include the future of Jerusalem. The actions of Israel [in opening the tunnel] contradict that provision and strengthen Palestinian fears that they are being driven from the city by hook and by crook."

Believers in "the peace process" have painted a rather rosy picture. The editorial position taken by *ITT* has agreed exactly with the official wisdom in Washington: The accords are wonderful, the peace process is on track, and Israel has agreed to give up the Occupied Territories and to permit the establishment of a Palestinian state. For example, on April 1, the *ITT* editorial said that "the intifada finally convinced most Israelis that the struggle to keep the Occupied Territories was a war that could never be won." This is wishful thinking. Israel has kept every single West Bank settlement, the settler population of the West Bank has increased, Israel has continued to confiscate land on the West Bank, and Israel is building a vast network of modern highways linking the West Bank with Israel.

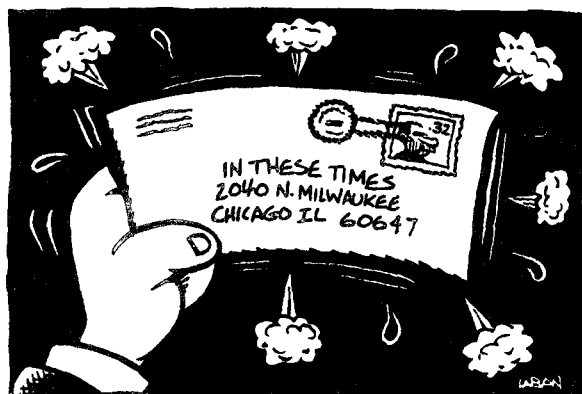
There is no indication that the starry-eyed supporters of the Oslo agreement have ever actually read it. One veteran Israeli journalist com-

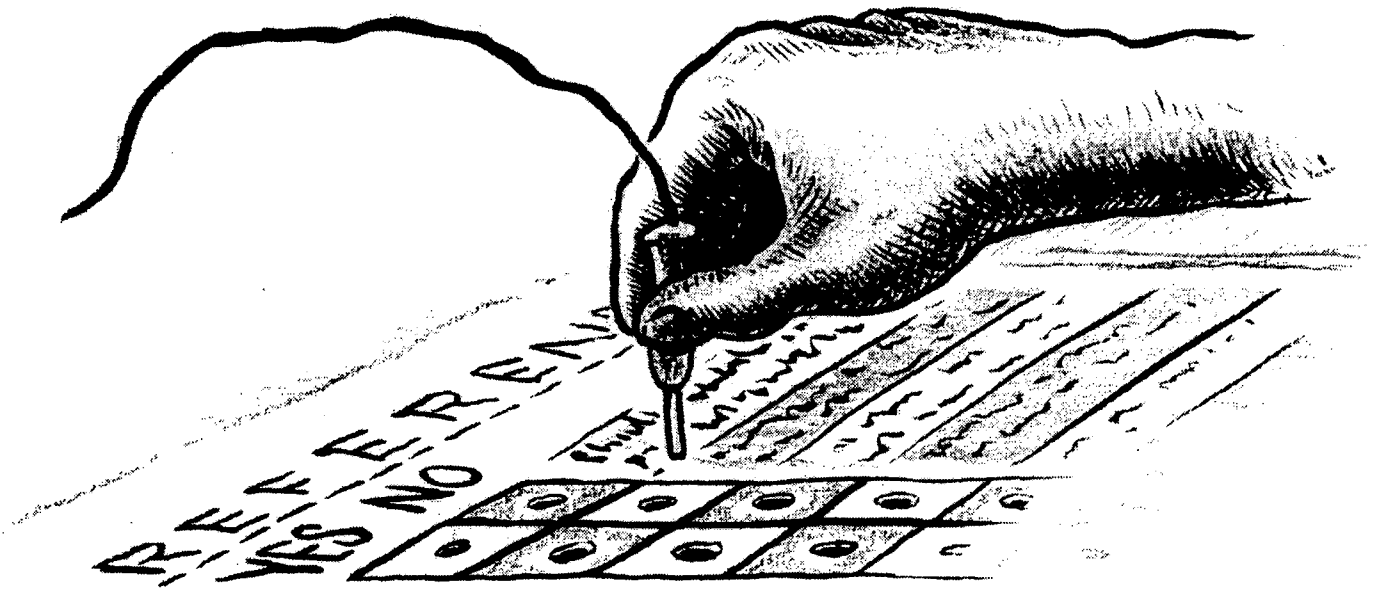
ments that "despite what many people think, the Oslo accords do not commit Israel to do anything except talk." The critics, on the other hand, have read the agreement and they know the score. Few people realize that Israel has not actually withdrawn its troops from the West Bank and Gaza, but merely redeployed them from the middle of Palestinian villages to military bases outside of the villages. The truth is that neither Labor nor Likud ever intends to give up the Occupied Territories.

John Farley
Henderson, Nev.

Editor's note: In These Times did greet the peace process as a step in the right direction. We did so along with the great majority of the Palestinian people. Like them, we were well aware of the limitations of the Oslo Accords but saw them as the potential beginning of a process that could lead to a Palestinian state and the withdrawal of Israeli forces and settlers from the West Bank. It's easy to pick the accords apart, especially from the vantage point of the United States. Living in the West Bank and Gaza, though, gives one a different perspective—and one that we think it more important to understand and honor.

The election of Likud and Benjamin Netanyahu, however, puts things in a new light. It also makes the "we told you so" crowd more credible. Some on the left may take comfort in this development, as it seems to validate their analysis. To us, it is a tragedy that will cause both sides many more years of misery, insecurity and terror.

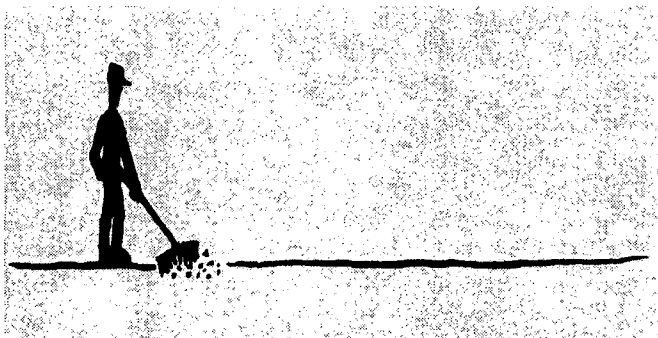




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Taking the initiative

The 1996 election saw a record number of voter-initiated ballot questions. Citizens and pressure groups across the country promoted more than 300 initiatives, and 90 made it onto the ballot (Oregonians alone voted on 17). As part of our pre-election coverage, *In These Times* reported on a number of initiatives around the country relating to the vital issues of our time. We asked some of our regular contributors to update readers on the results.



Wage gains in the West

Go west, workers. That's where the best low-wage jobs in the nation will be, now that voters in California and Oregon have approved ballot initiatives raising their state minimum wages above the newly boosted federal rate of \$5.15 an hour (which takes effect in September 1997). California's min-

imum wage will rise to \$5.75 an hour by the end of the year, while Oregon's new minimum will be phased in incrementally over three years, reaching \$6.50 by January 1997.

"This was a clear-cut gut issue for most Oregonians," says Duke Shepard of the Raise the Minimum Wage coalition. His group's measure passed with 55 percent of the vote, even though business organizations spent \$500,000 trying to defeat it. Oregon has for years had a minimum wage higher than the federal rate; until the recent U.S. increase, its minimum of \$4.75 was the highest in the nation.

In California, pay-raise advocates may have been helped by the slew of ballot propositions that faced voters. Business groups were preoccupied fighting two health care reform proposals and an initiative aimed at making securities fraud lawsuits easier to file. The minimum wage initiative "was not one of our high priorities," said Kirk West, president of the California Chamber of Commerce, in a post-election interview with the *Los Angeles Daily News*.

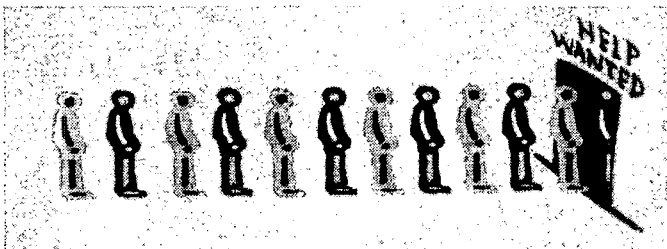
No such luck elsewhere. Minimum wage hikes were defeated in Missouri, Montana and the city of Denver. Business groups outspent labor 12-to-1 on a pay hike proposal in Denver, and the measure lost by a margin of nearly 4-to-1. In Missouri, opponents of a minimum wage increase spent \$2 million against the measure, and it was defeated by a 70-30 margin.

The result was closer in Montana, where 55 percent of voters rejected a pay hike. "The voters were with us until the National Restaurant Association dumped in \$200,000 in

the last month," says Don Judge, executive secretary of the Montana AFL-CIO. Labor's tracking polls, Judge notes, showed 67 percent support for the measure as late as six weeks before the election. That support faded once business groups began to "barrage the airwaves," he says. "You saw five or six ads a day, frightening little old ladies, telling them they'd have to leave Montana because prices would get so high if this thing passed."

But labor, consumer and environmental groups may have the last laugh in Montana. Having watched business interests spend more than \$1 million to quash the minimum wage and an anti-pollution initiative, Montana residents voted 2-to-1 to ban direct corporate spending on future ballot initiative campaigns.

—Roger Kerson



A blow to affirmative action

In a campaign closely watched around the country, California became the first state to ban public-sector affirmative action programs for women and minorities. White voters fueled a 55-45 percent win for Proposition 209, the California Civil Rights Initiative, which ends race- and gender-based anti-discrimination programs in state and local hiring, contracting and school admissions (see "Golden opportunity," April 1). Only San Francisco and six other Bay area counties voted against the measure.

Exit polls showed 60 percent of whites voted for Prop 209, while 74 percent of blacks and 70 percent of Latinos voted against it. Asian-Americans were more closely split, with 55 percent voting against the initiative. Half of all women and 57 percent of white women backed the measure.

A week prior to the election, Bruce Cain, a political scientist at the University of California-Berkeley, polled more than 1,400 voters and found that while respondents still believed women and minorities faced discrimination, they were inclined to vote for the initiative because they disliked rigid hiring preferences and goals.

Some observers argue that voters may have been misled by Prop 209's deceptive wording. "The language of the initiative stated that it would ban discrimination," says David Binder, a San Francisco-based election pollster. "It did not mention banning affirmative action programs."

Despite the initiative's ratification, it may be a long while before it is put into effect. The day after the election, civil rights organizations filed a legal challenge in federal court, arguing that the measure is pre-empted by federal civil rights laws and violates the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution by singling out women and minorities. Given the vague

wording of the measure, other lawsuits are sure to follow.

"The initiative leaves open the question of what forms of affirmative action will be acceptable in the future," Cain says. "Prop 209 bans the use of race- and gender-based preferences, but what exactly is a preference?" Affirmative action plans span a wide continuum, from programs with rigid goals for hiring minorities and women to expenditures to increase the pool of job and school applicants from all representative populations.

"In the future, the programs most likely to go by the wayside are the set-aside programs," Cain says. "As for the rest, we'll have to wait and see."

—Nina Schuyler

Campaign finance reform moves ahead

Citizens are ready to change the campaign finance system, and said so on election day when they passed reform initiatives in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Montana and Maine.

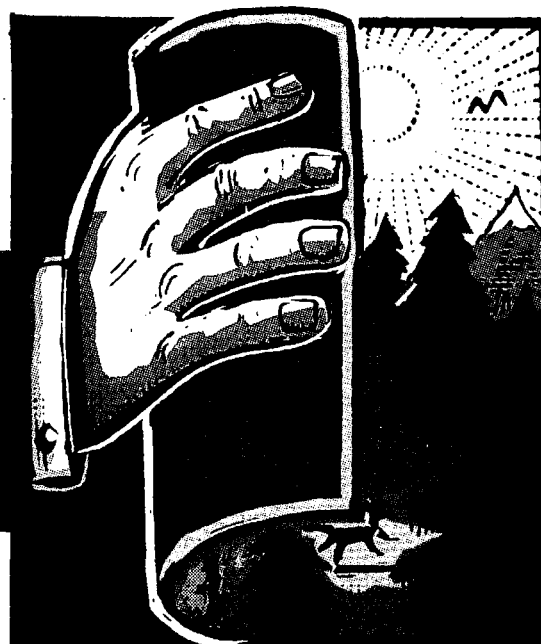
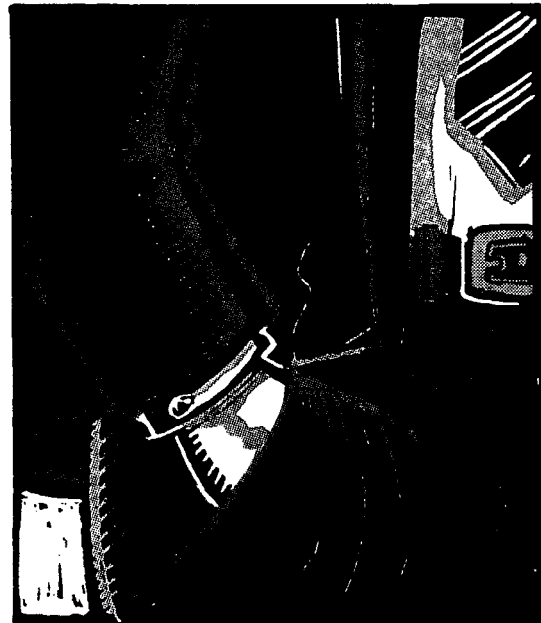
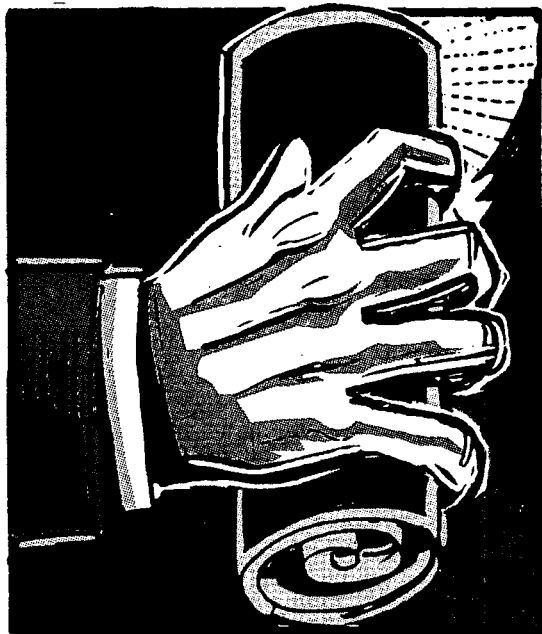
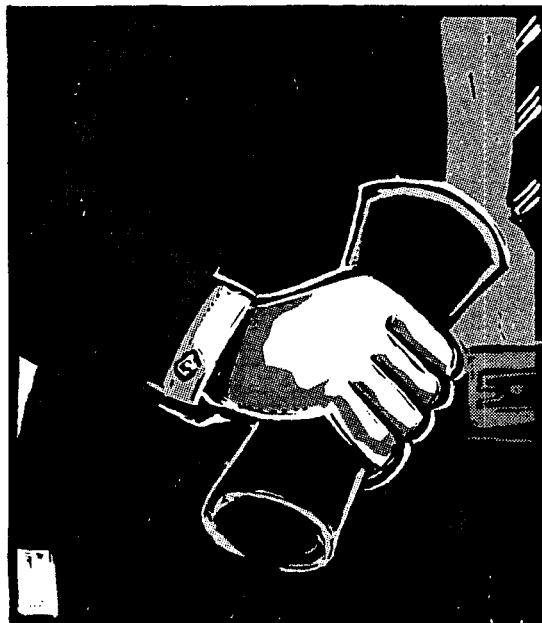
The most significant victory came in Maine, where citizens voted 56-44 percent to implement a system of full public financing for all state races (see "Reforming the beast," June 24, and "Voting matters," October 14). "The success of what we have done here in Maine is a testimony to grassroots organizing and coalition building," says David Donnelly, director of Maine Voters for Clean Elections. "We have shattered the glass ceiling of what is possible on this issue." Reform advocates in Missouri, Massachusetts, Vermont, North Carolina, Arizona, Michigan, Illinois, Connecticut, Wisconsin and New York are all looking to follow the Maine example, Donnelly adds.

But reformers are not out of the woods yet. Arguing that the new contribution regulations will limit free speech, the Maine Civil Liberties Union has indicated that it will go to



court to overturn the law. "We have won in the court of public opinion. Now we need to win in other courts," Donnelly says.

In California, Proposition 208, the tepid proposal put forth by Common Cause and the League of Women Voters, passed with 61 percent of the vote. This measure features voluntary caps on campaign spending and limits all contributions to \$1,000. Voters rejected by a 2 percent margin

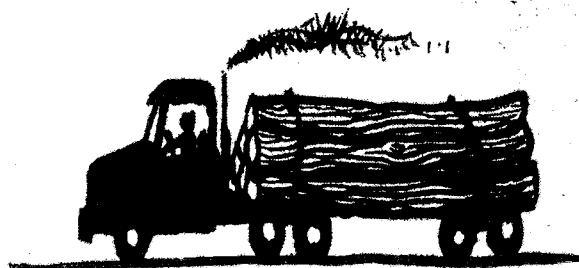


Proposition 212, a more stringent reform spearheaded by the California Public Interest Research Group (CalPIRG) that included \$100 contribution limits.

In its campaign to boost Prop 208, Common Cause attacked the CalPIRG initiative as too radical. "They spent a lot of time attacking our organization," says Adam Ruben of the Yes on 212 campaign. "I don't think that helped clarify the issue for voters. But we are very pleased that there is so much support for campaign finance reform, and we hope that 208 will get some of the money out of the system." But Ruben points to a number of serious problems with campaign financing that 208 doesn't address. "It doesn't ban campaign contributions from corporations," he says. "Nor does it deal with the fact that 80 percent of campaign funds in California comes from out of the district."

Ruben says that CalPIRG plans to work with PIRG affiliates across the country on a national campaign to pass a constitutional amendment stipulating that campaign contributions do not equal free speech.

—Joel Bleifuss



Clearcutting ban gets the ax in Maine

A pioneering initiative to ban clearcutting in Maine failed, thanks largely to record-breaking spending on a rival proposition backed by the timber industry. Thirty percent of Maine voters supported the "Ban Clearcutting" initiative, while 47 percent backed the much weaker "Compact for Maine's Forests" and 23 percent voted for "None of the Above." Under Maine law, because the Compact gained the most votes but not a majority, it will be voted on again.

Jonathan Carter, a forestry scientist and former Maine Green Party gubernatorial candidate who led the Ban Clearcutting campaign, ascribes the loss to \$6 million in spending for the Compact. If the industry-supported measure had not been on the ballot, he argues, "we would have won this hands-down." Nonetheless, given that both measures advertised some limits on industrial forestry in Maine, Carter claims a moral victory. "We got a mandate from the people: They don't want the forests to be destroyed," Carter says.

Carter's group plans to oppose the Compact when it comes up for a vote again in the next statewide election, slated for June 1998. While the Compact reduces the maximum legal size of a clearcut from 250 to 75 acres, Carter claims it effectively does nothing, since the current average clearcut in Maine is 33 acres.

The Compact was the result of a deal Independent Gov. Angus King brokered between the timber industry and several mainstream environmental groups in the state. Opponents of the clearcutting ban viewed it as "much too stringent," says Vic Berardelli, spokesperson for the Compact campaign. Supporters of the Compact pointed to a state study showing that the clearcutting ban would cut the timber harvest in northern Maine by 60 percent, resulting in the loss of 15,600 jobs and a loss of \$3.2 billion to Maine's economy. Even companies that only selectively cut their forests would have been affected, which is why they threw their support behind the Compact, Berardelli says.

Calling the state study "disingenuous," Carter claims that the ban would add 1 percent at most to the cost of finished products. "If timber companies can't meet the minimum stan-



Mixed result for Everglades

The Save Our Everglades Coalition (SOEC) put three constitutional amendments on the Florida ballot aimed at forcing the sugar industry to pay for much of the estimated \$1 billion cleanup of the Everglades (see "A sweet deal for the sugar industry," October 14). The sugar industry spent an estimated \$35 million to defeat Amendment 4, which fell just short with 46 percent of the vote. The amendment would have levied a penny-per-pound fee on raw sugar production and could have raised \$900 million over 25 years to pay for cleanup. (Voters approved another amendment, heavily sponsored by the sugar industry, that requires a two-thirds majority to pass future tax amendments.)

Nonetheless, Amendment 5, which holds polluters financially responsible for costs incurred as a result of their pollution, passed with 68 percent of the vote. Amendment 6, which sets up a trust fund for any money earmarked for Everglades cleanup and restoration, also passed with 57 percent of the vote.

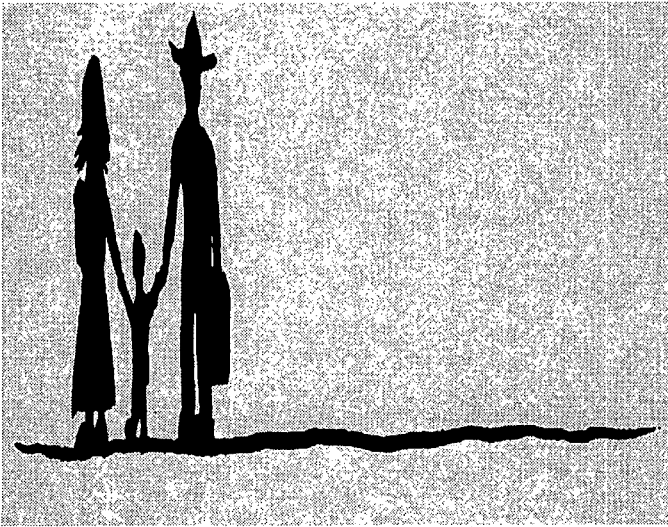
Following the election, SOEC's Joe Garcia remained optimistic about the precedent-setting power of Amendment 5, the first constitutional amendment in any state to require polluters to pay for the damage they cause. In future battles in the Florida legislature and the courts, says Garcia, "Amendment 5 will be our stealth missile."

—Gary Barlow

dards in our bill," he says, "they're not doing good work."

The Ban Clearcutting campaign plans to remain active, and is considering another initiative. "You don't have to win to influence the way things come out," Carter says. "We're stronger than we were nine months ago. We are not going away."

—Patrick Mazza



Anti-immigrant propositions die early

When California voters passed Proposition 187 two years ago by a decisive 59-41 percent margin, the movement to take away immigrant rights at the ballot box appeared to be an unstoppable juggernaut.

President Clinton and the 104th Congress took up the anti-immigrant drumbeat, boosting the size of the Border Patrol, passing tough national immigration legislation, and cutting off welfare benefits to legal immigrants. But this year immigrant scapegoating by means of the ballot proved to have shorter legs. Anti-immigrant forces in Oregon, Florida and Arizona failed to gather enough signatures to qualify their Prop 187-like initiatives for the November ballot. The proposed measures ranged from barring undocumented immigrants from social services and public schools, to requiring proof of citizenship to get a driver's license, to granting a business the right to sue another business if employment of undocumented workers causes unfair competition.

Unlike California Gov. Pete Wilson, who made support for Prop 187 a key plank of his '94 re-election campaign, most mainstream politicians were wary of the 187 copycat initiatives this year. Govs. Fife Symington in Arizona and Lawton Chiles in Florida publicly declared their opposition to the measures. Only Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber did not come out for or against his state's anti-immigrant initiatives.

Perhaps more decisive, however, was the greater degree of organization and unity among immigrant rights advocates. In

California, those who opposed Prop 187 were caught off-guard by the groundswell of popular support for the initiative, and remained splintered over strategy up to election day. By contrast, immigrant rights forces this year quickly organized broad grassroots campaigns against the propositions.

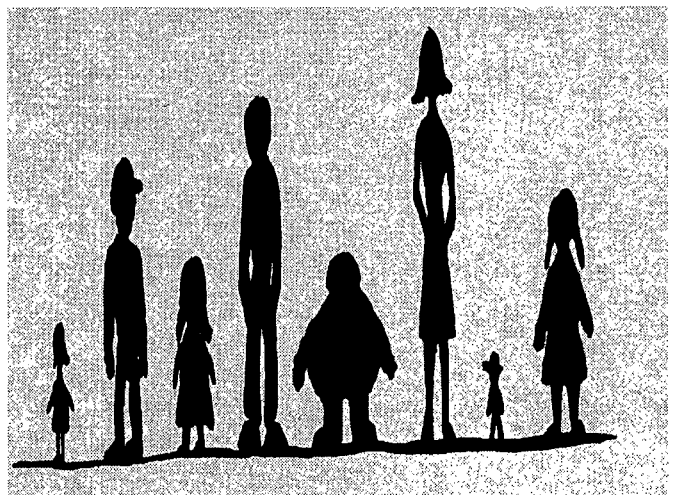
While immigrant rights advocates won this round, the fight is not yet over. Anti-immigrant groups vow to get their measures on the 1998 ballots in all three states. Meanwhile, Causa '96 in Oregon and the Committee for Dignity and Justice in Florida plan to fight the national immigration legislation at the state level and launch campaigns to register Latino voters.

—Deidre McFadyen

PR goes down in Frisco

San Franciscans voted 57-43 percent against adopting a proportional representation (PR) system to elect the city's Board of Supervisors (see "Voting matters," October 14). The proportional representation ballot measure, Proposition H, failed despite a string of big-name endorsements and the editorial support of the *San Francisco Examiner*. At the same time, 56 percent of voters cast ballots for Proposition G, which will replace the current at-large voting system with a district system in the year 2000.

Rob Richie of the Center for Voting and Democracy, a



PR advocacy group in Washington, D.C., that acted as a catalyst for the San Francisco campaign, explains the loss this way: "It was a new idea, San Francisco was pretty big, and we didn't have a big campaign staff." He adds that it didn't help matters that the proposed PR system on the ballot, known as preference voting, is "a little bit complicated." Richie is now looking to the citizens of Cincinnati, who will vote next spring on a package of electoral reforms, one of which is PR.

But not all PR-related election news was bad. The two strongest PR proponents in Congress, Reps. James Clyburn (D-SC) and Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), were re-elected.

—Joel Bleifuss



California rejects HMO reform

California voters rejected two initiatives that would have reformed the health maintenance organization (HMO) industry, sending a signal that people are more concerned with the cost of health care than the quality.

Propositions 214 and 216 would have put new restrictions on the HMO industry, prohibiting gag orders on doctors and imposing new taxes on the industry to pay for certain medical services (see "Reining in HMOs," September 2). Similar in many respects but at the same time rivals, both propositions were roundly rejected. Prop 214 attracted 42 percent of the vote and Prop 216 attracted 39 percent.

The initiatives ran aground partly because voters found their similarity "confusing," says Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, a senior associate at the Center for Politics and Economics at the Claremont Graduate School. Moreover, Jeffe adds, "little was done to explain the 'yes' side to people." Six weeks before the election, a Field Poll showed 64 percent of people surveyed said they understood the measures "not too well" or "not at all."

Other factors played a crucial role as well. Opponents of the measures outspent proponents 20-to-1. "The opponents spent \$10 million on TV and radio ads, and we spent a half-million," says Jamie Court, director of Consumers for Quality Care in Santa Monica.

Jeffe says that the measures also suffered from a residue of voter skepticism about large-scale health care reform, which she traces to President Clinton's failed 1993 national health care plan. But Bruce Cain, a political scientist at the University of California-Berkeley, says that the issue is not going to go away. "The numbers of uninsured present a massive prob-

lem," Cain says. "This election shows us that when President Clinton deals with this issue, he needs to assure people he is not going to increase the level of regulation or increase the costs of health care."

Proponents of Prop 216 have already regrouped and are planning a new campaign to educate patients to protect themselves against the practices of the HMO industry. They are printing up brochures and leaflets that encourage patients to ask if HMOs have imposed gag orders on their physicians or have paid them bonuses for not prescribing expensive tests.

For now, Californians will have to look to the statehouse for HMO reform. But, says Court, "if the legislature does not enact legislation to protect the patient, we will be back at the ballot box in 1998."

—Nina Schuyler

SOURCES

Roger Kerson is editor of the *National News Reporter*, a bi-weekly newspaper covering jobs, trade and political reform.

Nina Schuyler is a San Francisco-based journalist who writes frequently about legal issues.

Gary Barlow is a freelance journalist based in Tallahassee, Fla.

Patrick Mazza is an environmental journalist based in Portland, Ore., who writes frequently on forest issues.

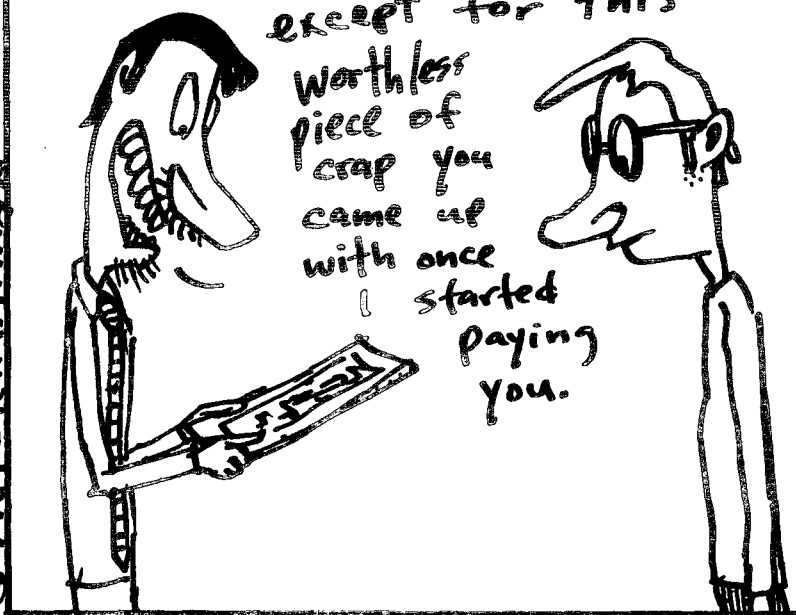
THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

By Peter Hannan

It's weird, but I've loved
every single solitary thing you've
ever done in your career...
except for this

worthless
piece of
crap you
came up
with once
started
paying
you.

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T H E F I R S T S T O N E

THE NEXT 20 YEARS

By Joel Bleifuss

On November 15, 1976, *In These Times*, operating out of second-floor offices above a Milwaukee Avenue storefront in Chicago's yet to be hip-ified Wicker Park, sent its first issue into the world. The black-and-white cover featured a John Judis interview with Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA), in which the Bay area congressman told readers: "I think democratic socialism will prevail in this country because it makes an enormous amount of sense."

In the 20 years since that issue rolled off the press, some things have changed at *In These Times*. Judis moved to the *New Republic*, and "Independent socialist newspaper" was dropped from the masthead. Our writers now use the term "progressive," a word which previously referred only to the Progressive Era in the early years of the century.

Other things, though, have remained the same. Our offices are back on Milwaukee Avenue. Democratic socialism still makes an enormous amount of sense. And *In These Times* continues to publish, thanks to those of you who contribute above the annual cost of your subscription. (In 1995, reader contributions made up \$401,000 of our \$994,000 annual budget.)

So what does the future hold? Back in 1976, founding editor and publisher Jim Weinstein hoped that *In These Times* would serve the same function as the *Appeal To Reason*, the national newspaper established in 1895 that served as a catalyst of the socialist movement of Eugene Debs. At its height in 1912, the circulation of the *Appeal To Reason* was 700,000. "We hoped to have a similar relationship to a political left," says Weinstein. "We wanted to create a magazine that was independent, but would serve as a source of information and education for the movement's popular constituency. All of that was based on the miscalculation that the country would swing back to the left."

"We did not want the left to be as directionless and leaderless as the New Left of the '60s had been. You cannot have a viable political movement of the left, right or

center if it doesn't have its own press. But the fate of the magazine was tied to the U.S. left, so we were in for 20 years of hard times. However, our underlying perspective really hasn't changed. What we thought might happen in 1976 appears possible in 1996, especially with the revival of the labor movement and the possibility that it will break away from its role as a junior partner in building a corporate consensus."

Looking to the future, Weinstein says the left and the labor movement need to develop popular programs that impose social control on corporate goals. "Clinton operates on the principle that whatever is good for business is good for America, and that obviously is not the case," says Weinstein. "Our role in the next four years is going to be to talk about the different ways in which social policy can be developed to put human need above corporate greed, to establish the social principles that have to be protected, and to force corporations to operate within those parameters."

Managing editor Deidre McFadyen, a Canadian who previously edited *NACLA Report on the Americas*, believes that magazines like *In These Times* can help set the agenda of a new progressive movement. "Since an organized, united left has yet to coalesce, everything is still up for grabs—the issues progressives should focus on, the kinds of alliances we need to build, the way we should frame the debates. I see *ITT* playing a leading role in those conversations," she says. "The magazine's attention to core economic issues will continue, but I see our focus widening. I don't believe that you can draw a firm line between economic and so-called social issues. For example, women's access to safe and reliable reproductive care is directly related to how resources are allocated."

"I think the magazine should challenge old assumptions and grapple with, rather than shy away from, difficult issues," McFadyen continues. "Take the Starbucks cover story we did last issue. On the one hand, Starbucks has excellent employee benefits and supports CARE, yet on the other, our neighborhoods are becoming more homogeneous as this corporation pushes out independent coffee houses. I want readers to think about those sorts of contradictions."

Senior editor David Moberg, who has been with *In These Times* since its inception, says that one of the most important issues that the magazine should confront is globalization. "The form that globalization is taking represents a shift in the balance of power and the triumph of the free market outlook in both economics and politics," says Moberg, who has been on leave for the past year working on a book about globalization. "That has really put not only socialist, but social democratic ideas in retreat. In the

past, a lot of American leftists saw the United States as a beneficiary of 'imperialism,' and consequently viewed their job as supporting Third World protests against U.S. policies. Increasingly, the forces of globalization that are driving down the standard of living elsewhere are doing the same for the majority of Americans as well. Those developments preoccupy me—and ought to preoccupy any progressive—because the revival of a progressive movement has to take place in that context."

Salim Muwakkil, who joined *In These Times* in 1984 and is now one of the nation's leading political journalists, believes that the "jobs crisis"—the decreasing number of jobs that pay a living wage, especially in the cities—is at the root of our urban ills. "We are facing a tremendous shift in the economy, and *In These Times* should be in the forefront of trying to figure out what that shift means to the most vulnerable members of society," he says. "For me, the most crucial concern is the growth of the corrections-industrial complex. I see urban communities absolutely stripped of young black men. They are being diverted into the criminal justice system, and then return to society influenced by a pervasive prison culture. And in true capitalist form, the stock market is capitalizing on the situation. Private prison stocks are outperforming high-tech stocks."

Muwakkil says he senses that proportional representation will become a more important issue, not because of the problems of race-specific redistricting, but because democracy is in crisis. "Fewer and fewer people are politically involved in this country," says Muwakkil. "The winner-take-all system leaves too many people discontented."

Assistant managing editor Dave Mulcahey, who came to *ITT* via *The Baffler*, believes people are also unhappy with mainstream media whose editorial content is increasingly determined by conglomerates' bottom line. "Readers really appreciate smart, incisive criticism not only of the political and corporate institutions that dominate our country, but also of the commercial news media that have supposedly been invested with the duty of scrutinizing the powerful," says Mulcahey. "*In These Times* is an issue-driven magazine. We are, to use a bad marketing metaphor, the steak rather than the sizzle. It's hard to put out a magazine that attempts to probe real issues when you have to compete for attention and money with the surfeit of superficial publications that are ultimately diverting noise. But good journalism can coax people out of the passivity and cynicism that corporate media have done so much to inspire."

"I see the left press as the last bastion of muckraking," says Mulcahey. "The corporate media aren't going to rake muck, because it doesn't make business sense. The same goes for satire. What can Time Warner and Gannett—or, for that matter, PBS and the *New York Times*—possibly say about the ever-growing absurdity of American political discourse? It's largely their creation. The field is wide open for the left press: We have the talent and the energy. With more resources, we could be dangerous."

"I think this is potentially an exciting time to be on the

left," says culture editor J.W. Mason, who joined *In These Times* in August after a stint at the *Left Business Observer*. "There's a lot more serious thinking going on today than there was even a few years ago about what should be our bedrock issues—labor organization, the distribution of income, the need for a real alternative to the Democratic Party, changes in the workplace, and the fact that we have a government of, by and for business. What a magazine like *ITT* can do—and what I certainly hope to do in the culture section—is foster a real debate on these questions. Colin Gordon's recent review of Theda Skocpol's book *Boomerang* was an excellent example of what I'd like to see more of: It not only provided a lucid explanation of why Clinton's 1993 health plan failed, it also made a thorough critique of Skocpol's neo-institutionalist account, which downplayed the importance of the insurance industry and business interests."

Associate publisher Beth Schulman, who helped found the Independent Press Association, believes *In These Times'* strength lies in its ongoing examination of the conflict between corporate interest and public interest. "The left has put a lot of energy into demonstrating the relationship between money and politics, but what *ITT* is especially good at is starting with a specific issue and showing how corporations influence the policy-making process. A good example of that approach is our recent cover story exposing the dangerous compromises necessary to pass the Kassebaum-Kennedy health care bill. With the election behind us, we need to return to examining how day-to-day policy-making is constantly affected by this fundamental conflict."

Bob McChesney, a journalism professor at the University of Wisconsin who serves on the *In These Times* board, says the progressive community needs high-quality political journalism. "Nobody is doing what *ITT* is trying to do," says McChesney. "*ITT* is the only publication right now doing consistent political journalism, covering the crucial stories of politics and resource allocation, stories of how power actually operates, and stories of how people organize democratically. These are the stories that tend not to get covered at all or in a very warped manner in the commercial press. This country desperately needs a press that is not beholden to dominant political corporate interests." He concludes, "*ITT* needs to do what it is presently doing but with the resources to do it better."

And, adds McFadyen, *In These Times* needs the resources to make sure that more readers are given a chance to try the magazine. "The structural obstacles to running a not-for-profit alternative magazine are enormous," she says. "We can't bring in a huge amount of advertising, and advertising is the principal source of income for most magazines. We have to rely on building paid circulation and increasing donations from loyal readers. I think *ITT* could really have an impact on the national agenda, but it hinges on our getting on enough newsstands and having the money to do direct mail promotions to reach new subscribers." ◀

E N V I R O N M E N T

For a few dollars more

Clinton's environmental policy is less "make the polluter pay" than "let's pay off the polluter."

By Jeffrey St. Clair and Alexander Cockburn

This August, a vacationing Bill Clinton visited Yellowstone National Park to affirm his administration's commitment to nature. It was the beginning of a furious month-long gallop across the country in which every stop featured the announcement that an ecosystem menaced had been saved and that, with Bill Clinton as president, America would stay forever green. The press simply regurgitated the bombast, scanting the unseemly details of the president's enviro-deals.

In Yellowstone, let us recall, Clinton announced that the oldest park in the nation had been saved from predations on its northern border by a Canadian mining company.

After a pit stop at the Democratic convention in Chicago, Clinton made his way to Beverly Hills for a Barbra Streisand-anchored fundraiser featuring an all-

star line up of Hollywood's green celebrities. The press treated the shindig, which netted the Clinton-Gore campaign \$4 million, as a society event, not a political affair.

From Hollywood, the intrepid president sped on to the north rim of the Grand Canyon to announce that 1.7 million acres of federal lands in Utah would now be designated a national monument, supposedly saving them from being mined for coal.

Next Clinton appeared in the Pacific Northwest where, under the alpenglow of Mt. Hood, he declared that he was saving the region's old-growth forests. Timber companies would stop logging in ancient groves inhabited by marbled murrelets in exchange for permits to log equivalent volumes of timber on other national forest lands in Washington and Oregon.

When the curtain came down on the finale of Clinton's green road show, the president's aides released the tentative terms of a deal protecting the Headwaters Grove in northern California, the last privately-owned stand of

virgin redwoods in America. The national press scarcely raised a murmur about the deal, which will pay off the Grove's owner, Charles Hurwitz, a corporate raider who is accused by the government of looting a Texas savings and loan at a cost to the taxpayer of \$1.6 billion.

The common denominator of Clinton's dealmaking is a version of the three-card shuffle: The right to plunder high-profile public assets is exchanged for the right to loot other, less-visible public assets. The right to pollute or destroy natural areas remains unchallenged. Indeed, Clinton's executive decrees have enshrined that right.

If this sounds harsh on the administration, let's review what has happened in the three months since the president's green march to see if it lived up to its advertisements.

To "save" Yellowstone, the government offered the Canadian mining company Noranda \$68 million worth of federal lands elsewhere in the state in exchange for giving up its mining claims near Yellowstone. There were other ways to stop Noranda from encroaching on the Yellowstone area. A sober interpretation of existing federal environmental laws (such as the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act) could have given regulators the authority simply to deny the company permits for the mine. But in the ecstasy of his Republican conversion, Clinton dropped these powerful weapons, declaring that he wanted to protect Noranda's property rights. In this way, Clinton succeeded where Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich had failed: He legitimized the doctrine of regulatory takings, which holds that environmental regulation "takes" the property of polluters and that therefore corporations must be paid not to pollute.

Revealingly, in his lengthy remarks in Yellowstone, Clinton never mentioned the reason a mine was sited on federal

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lands so close to Yellowstone in the first place: the archaic Mining Law of 1872, which allows anyone to claim any piece of public land that contains minable minerals for as little as \$2.50 an acre. The federal government received less than \$25,000 for the land containing the Noranda mine in the '80s; yet, it now plans to buy back those very same holdings by handing over federal land whose market value is 2,720 times greater. There are more than 16,000 other mining claims in the Yellowstone ecosystem alone; similar deals to protect those lands from equally destructive mining would bankrupt the treasury.

The proposed exchange has given a green light to anyone holding mining claims on the circumference of any other national park. All someone has to do is line up the bulldozers in front of the park gates and wait for the White House to phone with a lucrative buy-out offer. Only days after the presidential ceremony, a Wyoming company filed 175 mining claims along the ecologically pristine Rocky Mountain Front east of Glacier National Park.

The salvation of Yellowstone is, in any case, far from a done deal. It turns out that Noranda can veto any of the lands offered in exchange for its mining claims near the park. In addition, the settlement has to be finalized by December 31, 1996. If not, Noranda can back out of it. The feds are now having trouble finding enough land in Montana to suit Noranda's taste. The search cannot be extended outside the state without congressional approval. Given the secrecy and speed with which the deal was hatched, it is unlikely that such approval will be granted soon, if ever. Indeed, Sen. Conrad Burns (R-MT), who wants to keep the mining in

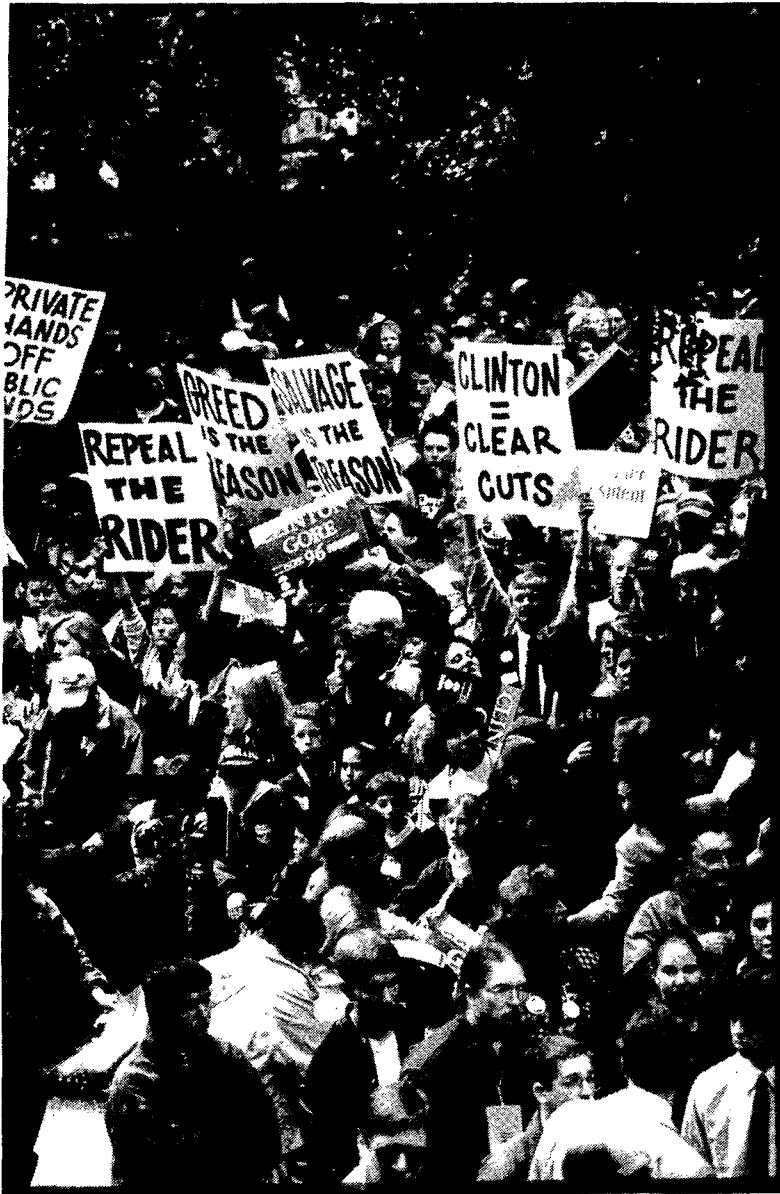
Montana to preserve jobs, has already vowed to kill any such maneuver.

A protest in Carlotta, Calif., against the felling of ancient redwoods.

"After reading the Noranda agreement in detail, I don't know the answer to even one of my questions about this deal," says Jim Jensen, director of the Montana Environmental Information Center in Helena, Mont., a mining watchdog group. Jensen wants to know whether the toxic waste at the site will be cleaned up, what public lands will be offered for trade, and whether the administration will push Congress to reform the Mining Law of 1872. "But we do know some things," he says. "Bill Clinton got his picture taken, and the press got duped into writing the greenwash headlines the White House wanted."

The Beverly Hills bash also had a subtext that mostly eluded a press corps entranced by the guest list and the entertainment. The hosts of the affair, media moguls Steven Spielberg and David Geffen, are involved in a huge real estate deal in Los Angeles known as the Playa Vista development. Their plan is to build a giant studio for their new company, Dreamworks. The development will destroy the Ballona wetlands, one of the largest coastal marshes in southern California and a critical staging area for migratory birds, according to Marcia Hanscom at the Wetlands Education Network in Los Angeles. The project needs to receive several federal permits before construction can begin.

Geffen and Spielberg have raised nearly \$8 million for the Clinton-Gore campaign and the Democratic Party in the last year. Thus, it's probably not surprising that in the past



six months, Vice President Al Gore has been making calls to key Sierra Club members and other green activists in Los Angeles, urging them to support the Playa Vista development as environmentally friendly.

Upon entering the old Harold Lloyd estate for the Clinton fundraiser, Geffen was confronted by environmental protesters. He airily dismissed their pleas to forego development at Ballona: "If you want to save the frogs," he quipped, "go protest at a French restaurant."

More starpower was on hand at Clinton's stop in Arizona. It was Robert Redford who introduced Clinton on the north rim of the Grand Canyon. Redford called the president's impending proclamation declaring Escalante Canyon a national monument "important almost to a moral degree, almost to a spiritual degree."

As the president preened before the cameras, some envi-

Protesters confront Clinton at a campaign stop in Portland.

ronmentalists pinched themselves in astonishment. Their position (for which Redford had lobbied fiercely in Congress last spring) had long been that no fewer than 5.7 million acres of Utah should be designated as a national wilderness or national park—categories that afford more environmental protection than a national monument. The final fallback position of the coal-mining companies and ranchers was introduced by conservative Republican Rep. James Hansen of Utah. His bill would have designated no more than 2 million acres as wilderness. In the end, Clinton used his executive powers to place just 1.7 million acres of land in the nebulous category of a national monument. The fate of the remaining four million acres remains in the hands of Congress.

It's unclear exactly how much protection the national monument designation provides the 1.7 million acres of the Escalante Canyon. As Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt confessed later that afternoon, national monument status (unlike park or wilderness status) does not preclude cattle grazing, off-road vehicle use, hunting and kindred activities. Babbitt described the designation as mainly "a name thing." When pressed, Babbitt admitted that nothing in the proclamation prevented the coal-mining companies from pressing forward with their existing claims within the area, although he said he hoped they would be willing to work out a Noranda-type deal elsewhere on public lands in Utah.

Good luck. The largest coal claim in southern Utah is owned by the Andalex Co., a Dutch consortium. Andalex estimates that its coal reserves are worth the implausible sum of nearly \$1 trillion. Babbitt conceded this might seem like a very hefty sum, but he was confident that the company could get land of equivalent value elsewhere in the state: "There's a lot of federal land in Utah and there are a lot of minerals on those lands." A trillion dollars worth? At that rate, Andalex could end up owning all the federal land in the Beehive State and then some.

Some environmentalists had rationalized the proclamation by saying Clinton could, in his second term, shift the designation from national monument to wilderness or park and also include the missing 4 million acres. Babbitt promptly dashed those hopes by telling reporters that "this won't happen for generations."

Clinton's trip down Interstate 5 in the Pacific Northwest completed the greenwash tour. Every time Clinton comes to Portland, he promises to save the old-growth forests, but more ancient trees always fall in his wake. Usually, a Clinton visit prompts at least a token protest from the logging industry. This time, the timber companies were thrilled about the deal they had just cut with the administration.

In exchange for giving up their contracts to log ancient

forests in the nesting habitat of the marbled murrelet, a dozen timber companies won rights to cut an equal amount from less controversial tracts of forest. The companies were happy to give back their contracts, since logging in the ancient forests had been halted by a series of court injunctions which ruled that planned clearcuts would violate the Endangered Species Act. Thanks to the Clinton administration, the companies (some of which have been investigated for illegally cutting old-growth trees) now get the logs they want without pesky contentions over the murrelet, and all with the support of the White House. The timber will still be old growth, but because it will be on less productive sites, the timber companies will clearcut perhaps twice as many acres of forest to get the "equivalent volume" promised by the government.

Clinton claimed to be saving the old-growth trees from the chainsaws, but he failed to mention that their plight stems directly from a bill he signed into law last July called the salvage logging rider. That bill doomed old-growth national forests and exempted the timber companies from compliance with most federal environmental laws. As Michael Donnelly, an environmentalist from Salem, Ore., put it at the Portland rally, "Clinton saved the old growth the way Reagan balanced the budget."

Back in Washington, the president crafted a final disastrous enviro-deal with Charles Hurwitz, owner of the Headwaters Grove in northern California. The administration said it was prepared to settle pending claims against him for the looting of the United Savings Association of Texas if Hurwitz agreed to turn over the core of the Headwaters Grove and a small buffer area, probably no more than 5,200 acres in total. The remaining 55,000 acres of magnificent 1,000-year-old redwoods would be shredded to make lawn furniture.

In early September, Hurwitz holed up in a San Francisco office building with Sen. Dianne Feinstein and deputy Interior Secretary John Garamendi, who assured him that the deal would go forward. Feinstein emerged from the meeting to denounce a demonstration against Hurwitz scheduled to take place in the mill town of Carlotta the next day. "Threats and intimidation and that kind of thing [aren't] going to solve this problem," she declared.

Nearly 8,000 people ignored her advice and showed up to demand that all 60,000 acres of the Headwaters forest complex be taken into public ownership. More than 1,000 people were arrested, including singers Bonnie Raitt and Don Henley and former California Congressman Dan Harnburg.

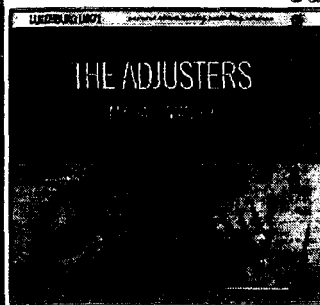
After the rally, Hurwitz upped the ante.

He summoned Garamendi to a meeting in Washington, D.C., telling him that if the administration didn't come forward with an even better deal in a week, he was going to order the cutting of the ancient redwoods. "This is America," Hurwitz boasted before ABC News cameras. "We paid for this forest. We paid taxes on it. The government needs to pay us not to log them." The government folded. Hurwitz is to receive \$380 million in cash and federal properties in exchange for turning over to the federal government only 5,200 acres of the 60,000-acre Headwaters Grove. Moreover, the Clinton administration agreed to give Hurwitz's company an exemption from the Endangered Species Act so that the remaining stands can be clearcut with legal impunity. Logging in ancient stands has already begun.

To be fair, Clinton has never made much of an effort to present himself as the heir to John Muir. The president's favorite view of nature is whatever sight can be glimpsed through the golden arches of his favorite fast food chain. Yet environmentalists did expect to have an ally in Al Gore, the Teflon veep and supposedly nature's friend. They were in for a big disappointment. One of the great mantras of modern environmentalism has been "make the polluter pay." Under Clinton, however, it has been the government that's paying off the polluters. But so far, the president has led a charmed life. In whistle-stop politics, the press bus rarely returns to the scene of the crime.

Jeffrey St. Clair is editor of *Wild Forest Review* in Oregon City, Ore. Alexander Cockburn is a columnist for *The Nation*.

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CENTRAL AFRICA

A disaster foretold



We should have seen it coming. Warning signals abounded—for anyone who cared to take notice. But just as the international community failed to intervene in Rwanda in 1994 until mayhem had broken out, so it stood by as a tinderbox of interconnected conflicts in Central Africa was allowed to erupt into a full-blown firestorm in eastern Zaire this October.

The fighting is the bitter outcome of two decades of growing human rights abuses by Zairian authorities against ethnic Tutsis in eastern Zaire's North and South Kivu provinces. After two million mainly Hutu refugees took shelter in the area in the wake of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, these authorities' tactics evolved into a full-blown ethnic cleansing campaign. This campaign was what finally sparked a Tutsi armed uprising in July that has shattered the political status quo in Zaire and drawn the country into

growing confrontation with Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda.

Within two short months, Tutsi rebels, with help from Rwanda's armed forces, have managed to wrest control of eastern Zaire's three largest towns—Bukavu, Uvira and Goma—from Zairian army troops. A humanitarian nightmare is now unfolding. Hundreds of thousands of panic-stricken refugees have deserted their camps and fled westward into the bush.

The fierce fighting in the region, coupled with the extensive looting of aid supplies by angry, poorly paid Zairian soldiers, forced all foreign relief workers to evacuate the area. The remaining local staff no longer have vehicles or supplies with which to monitor or assist the refugees. Close to a million Rwandan and Burundi refugees are now wandering in the countryside, at growing risk of starvation and disease.

Many who have tried to follow the complex Hutu-Tutsi conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi find Zaire's crisis even more confusing, in part because Zaire's Tutsis have varied origins. North Kivu's Tutsis, sometimes called Banyarwanda, arrived in the region relatively recently. Some found themselves in present-day Zaire after colonial powers in the 1880s redrew national boundaries in Africa's Great Lakes region. Still others came as economic migrants to North Kivu's Masisi area in the 1920s and '30s to work on Belgian plantations.

Only after Hutu-Tutsi tensions in neighboring Rwanda erupted in genocide in 1994 did North Kivu Tutsis come into direct conflict with local Hutus. In early 1996, Rwandan *genocidaires*—perpetrators of the 1994 genocide—from Zaire's refugee camps helped incite local Zairian Hutus to brutally attack the Northern Kivu Tutsis and another ethnic group, the Hunde. Following several particularly grisly massacres, more than 20,000 Tutsis fled for safety to Rwanda and still more to Uganda further north.

South Kivu's Tutsis, known as Banyamulenge, have a longer historical claim to Zairian nationality, having arrived in the area over two centuries ago. But they earned the rancor of other ethnic groups when, during the early '60s, they opposed a popular movement against Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko that espoused socialist ideals. Their relative prosperity as small traders and cattle owners has also generated envy over the years.

In 1981, a law stripped the almost 400,000 Banyamulenge of Zairian citizenship and the rights to vote and hold national public office. After many Hutu refugees fled Burundi in late 1993, following the October assassination of the country's first elected Hutu president, and Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide and subsequent Tutsi-led takeover, anti-Banyamulenge sentiment grew more fervent. This has provided a convenient pretext for local politicians eager to gain con-

The debacle in eastern Zaire could have been headed off if the international community had heeded the warning signs.

By Carole J. L. Collins

trol of Banyamulenge land and wealth.

In April 1995, Zaire's parliament barred Rwandan and Burundi refugees from acquiring Zairian citizenship. It also reclassified all Banyamulenge as refugees, barring them from all local administrative posts and from engaging in commerce. During the remainder of 1995, Banyamulenge were increasingly harassed, evicted from their homes, and barred from buying or selling land or cattle. Meanwhile, Zairian authorities made lists of Tutsi assets and properties to be expropriated. Despite reports by several human rights groups and the United Nations, virtually no foreign government formally objected to Zaire's policies of persecution.

Last July, the tempo of expulsions and expropriations in South Kivu picked up. Zairian soldiers and local vigilantes attacked, beat up, detained and even killed many Banyamulenge. But this time, unlike in Masisi months earlier, Zaire's Tutsis decided to fight back. By early October, Zairian military authorities, already on the defensive, had declared a state of war in South Kivu and gave all Banyamulenge one week to leave their mountain villages or be treated as rebels and killed on the spot.

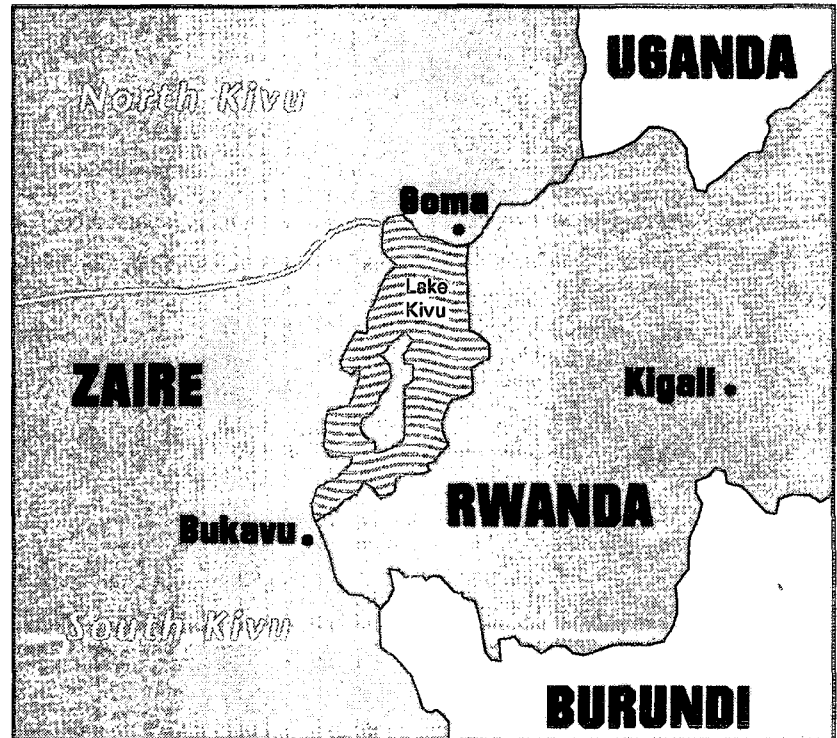
By early November, the Tutsi rebels had largely routed the Zairian military throughout the 200-mile swath of territory along Zaire's borders with Burundi and Rwanda. Casualties in the cities numbered several hundred. The rebels announced a unilateral cease-fire to facilitate humanitarian aid. By November 11, foreign aid workers had brought some food and medical aid into Goma from Rwanda.

But the crisis is far from over. Armed Hutu forces based in the Mugunga refugee camp continue to shell Goma, holding civilian refugees hostage and blocking the rebels from moving westward. The U.N. Security Council remains deadlocked over whether a humanitarian intervention force can provide immediate aid to refugees without re-establishing permanent camps along the tension-ridden border.

The Tutsi rebels' unexpectedly rapid military success shattered the invincible image of Zaire's armed forces, a major pillar of ailing Zairian dictator Mobutu's three decades of corrupt rule. The resulting turmoil has thrown into question already problematic plans for democratic elections in Zaire next year. The fighting has also fueled anti-Tutsi feelings among many Zairians. In the Zairian capital of Kinshasa, mobs have attacked and looted the shops and homes of local Tutsis as well as the embassies of the largely Tutsi Rwandan and Burundi governments.

Zaire's government has accused Rwanda and Burundi—and Uganda, a longtime diplomatic adversary of Mobutu—of “invading” its territory by training and arming young Banyamulenge. These claims have been partially confirmed by some local aid workers and U.N. sources. Ordinary

Zairians are outraged that a country as large and resource-rich as Zaire has been “defeated” by rebels whom they regard as proxies for Rwanda, a tiny nation with less than one-seventh the population. Some of their anger has focused on Mobutu and Prime Minister Leon Kengo wa Dondo (himself part Tutsi), who are blamed for the poor



condition of the Zairian army.

But the uprising cannot be blamed entirely on outside provocateurs. As U.N. Special Human Rights Rapporteur for Zaire Roberto Garreton pointed out almost a year ago, “local tribes were arming in readiness for a struggle against the Banyamulenge, forcing the latter to do the same.” Local Banyamulenge found it easy to tap into the illegal flows of arms, primarily to the Hutu extremists in the refugee camps. “All you need is \$10 or \$20 to buy a rifle,” says one Zairian human right activist.

The Zairian government has yet to address the primary Banyamulenge grievance: the denial of Zairian citizenship. As the European Union's special envoy to the region, Aldo Ajello, recently noted, Kinshasa should stop confusing the “limited problem of possible infiltration by young armed Banyamulenge with the much larger problem of the [denial of] legal status of the Banyamulenge who have long lived, sometimes for several generations, on the plateaus of [eastern Zaire's] Uvira region.”

These local ethnic tensions have been exacerbated by the continuing presence of almost 1.4 million Rwandan and Burundi refugees in Zaire (see “Zaire's Nightmare,” June 10). Rwandan *genocidaires*, who show no remorse for the 1994 blood-letting, continue to control many of the refugee camps. “The leaders responsible for genocide in Rwanda

And justice for none

Of all the obstacles to regional reconciliation in Central Africa, the most serious may be the international community's reluctance or inability to prosecute the 250,000 people implicated in planning and carrying out the genocide in Rwanda. The U.N.-created International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania, has been hamstrung from day one by limited financial resources, staff unversed in Rwanda's local languages and culture, and sketchy evidence that cannot precisely link specific suspects to specific genocidal acts. Moreover, few Rwandans can afford to travel there to testify as witnesses.

The *genocidaires'* impunity has embittered many Rwandan survivors of the massacre, and provided a pretext for Burundi's governing Tutsis not to make any meaningful concessions to its majority Hutu population. Because they believe they'll never be held accountable for their crimes, many in Central Africa are now using ethnic cleansing to seize political power and settle old scores. —C.C.

have been allowed to take root in Zaire," Rwandan Ambassador Theogene Rudasingwa said during a mid-October speech in Washington. "They have established an elaborate power structure within the refugee camps, supported by Zairian authorities and encouraged by the slow or non-response of the international community."

These camps served as bases for Hutu rebel groups fighting the Rwandan and Burundi governments. Rwandan Hutus bent on assassinating Rwandan government officials as well as survivors or witnesses of the genocide have spearheaded a number of cross-border attacks. Yet when Rwanda proposed to move refugees away from the Zairian border, it received a decidedly cool reception from Zaire.

As the United States and other governments scramble to respond to the new refugee crisis in eastern Zaire, many foreign aid workers acknowledge that relief aid bought time for the *genocidaires* controlling the refugee camps to re-arm for a future attempt to return to power.

Even before the latest crisis, the United Nations had proposed denying *genocidaires* refugee status and closing down those camps most closely controlled by Hutu extremists. "The question of refugees is the big question," says Arsene Kirhero Nsibula, a Rwandan human rights lawyer. "Without a compromise with the Rwandan government, they will always be a problem. In principle, we should punish the *genocidaires*, but it's hard to figure out how to do that or who will do it."

Several governments have proposed mounting an international intervention to assist the region's refugees, which would be organized under the auspices of the United Nations or the Organization of African Unity (OAU). But the U.N. Security Council is divided over what such an intervention should try to accomplish. France has proposed allowing the refugees to return to their camps, while others, including the United States, urge the creation of safe corridors to allow refugees to return home to Rwanda and

Burundi. It's far from clear, however, that the refugees can be persuaded to go. For two years now, they have resisted returning, fearing reprisals from Tutsi-dominated governments back home. Human rights monitoring in Rwanda and Burundi, which might ensure their safety, has been hobbled by lack of funds.

All observers agree that the resolution of the crisis in eastern Zaire must be regional in scope. "We need all countries involved in finding a solution," says Emmanuel Lubala, a lawyer who heads Inheritors of Justice, a human rights group based in Bukavu, Zaire. Lubala notes that Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania have all been saddled with a heavy refugee burden.

The international community's tunnel-vision focus on Rwanda and Burundi in the past few years meant that little attention was paid to the growing chaos and human

rights abuses in Zaire. Mobutu has even managed to reverse years of diplomatic isolation as Western governments solicited Zaire's cooperation in helping Rwandan refugees.

The Tutsi rebels' defeat of the Zairian army, however, has linked the regional and refugee crisis directly to Zaire's growing political instability. While Mobutu convalesces from surgery for prostate cancer at his villa in southern France, his continued absence from the country has created a power vacuum in Kinshasa. The rebels' announcement of an alliance with several other anti-Mobutu forces from Kasai and Shaba provinces only adds to the uncertainty.

In this political environment, a military coup becomes more likely—even as grassroots pressure for free and fair elections intensifies. "If the political situation in Zaire explodes," the U.N.'s Garretton warned recently, "its consequences will be far greater than those in Rwanda or Burundi."

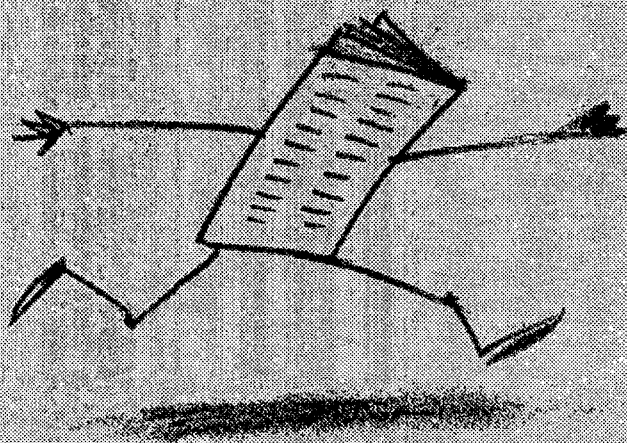
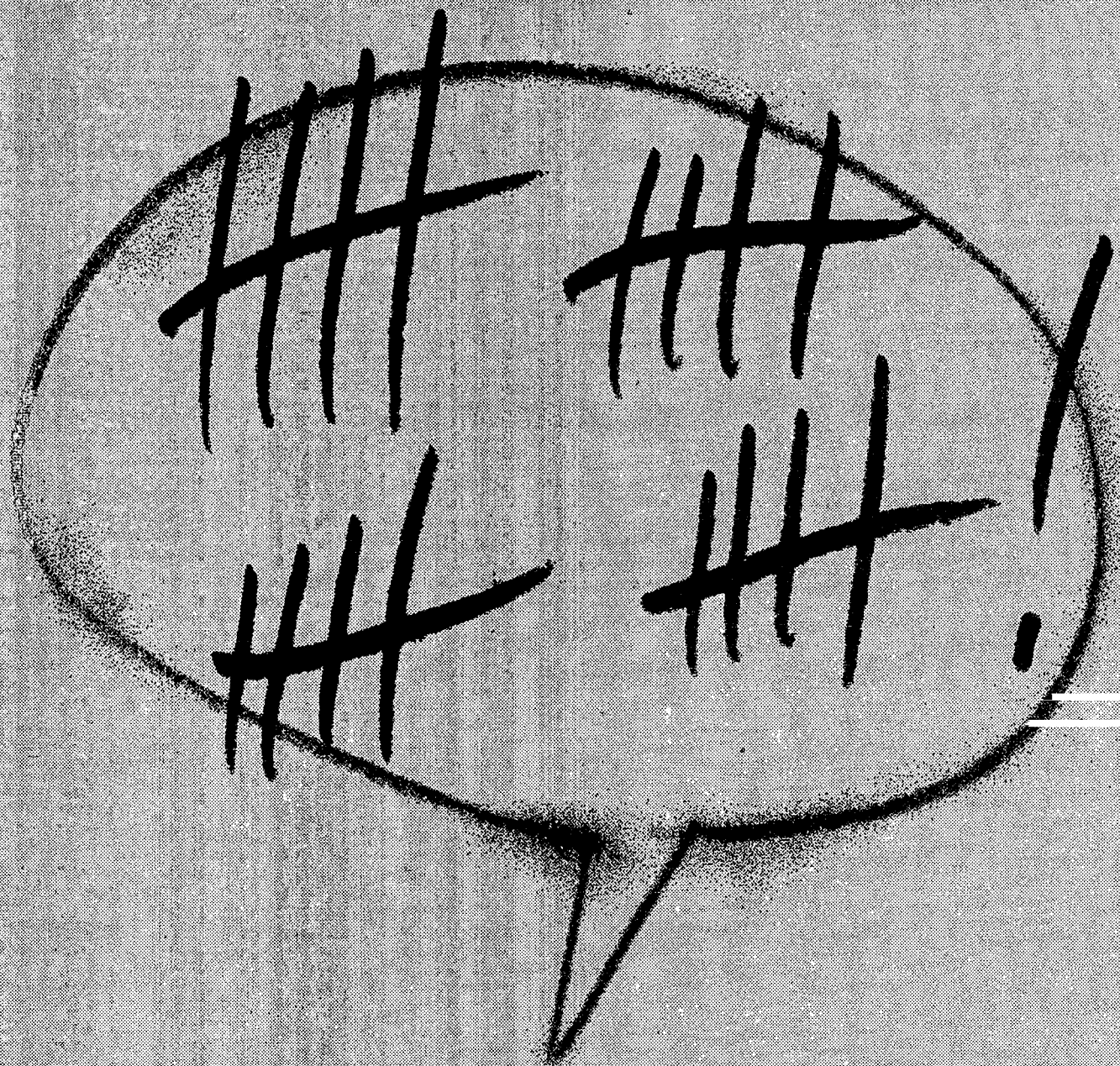
Carole J.L. Collins, a freelance journalist, visited Kenya, Rwanda and eastern Zaire last September.

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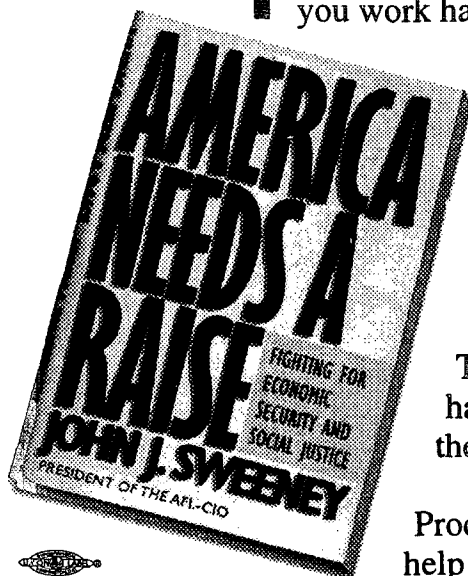
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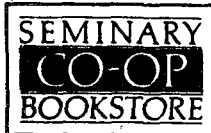
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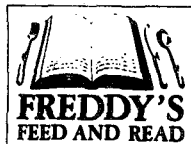
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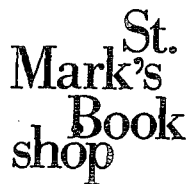
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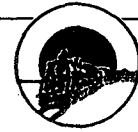
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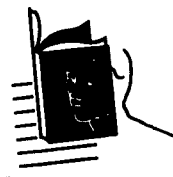
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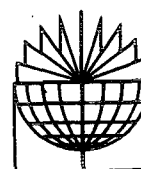
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[CONGRESS AND CHILDREN: HUNGER, HOMELESSNESS AND MURDER]

WILL CONGRESS LET OUR CHILDREN GO HUNGRY?

WHY CONGRESS'S CONTRACT WITH AMERICA WILL COST OUR CHILDREN APT-HOUSE PROGRAMS, BURNING ONE IN FIVE THE AMERICAN DREAM, INCLUDING MURDER OF CHILDREN. IF WE LET HUNGER, HOMELESSNESS, AND MURDER, WE WILL SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE NEXT CENTURY.

Did you know that Congress is about to pass a bill that will cost our children the right to a decent home? The bill, known as the "Contract with America," will allow the federal government to cut back on its commitment to provide affordable housing for low-income families. This means that many of our children will be forced to live in overcrowded, substandard conditions, or worse, on the streets.

Every child has the right to a safe and healthy home. But Congress is about to take away that right from millions of children. If we let this happen, we are sending a message to our children that their lives are not important. We are telling them that the government does not care about them.

The Contract with America is a betrayal of our children. It is a betrayal of the American dream. We must stand up to Congress and demand that they protect our children's right to a decent home. We must demand that they stop cutting back on social programs that have helped millions of children for decades.

Will Congress let our children go hungry? Will Congress let our children live in poverty? Will Congress let our children live in fear? We must say no. We must demand that Congress protect our children's right to a decent home, to a safe and healthy life, and to the American dream.

Thousands of men, women and children were killed when Union Carbide opened Bhopal, India. A decade later, tens of thousands more are still crippled and dying. Why is this corporation still in business?

SHOULD CORPORATIONS GET AWAY WITH MURDER?

Union Carbide is a multinational corporation that has been in business for over 100 years. It has made billions of dollars for its shareholders and executives. But it has also caused the deaths of thousands of people and the crippling of tens of thousands more. In 1984, a gas leak at a Union Carbide factory in Bhopal, India, killed over 2,000 people and injured tens of thousands more. The gas was highly toxic and caused severe respiratory problems, blindness, and even death.

Union Carbide has spent millions of dollars to cover up the truth about the Bhopal disaster. It has paid out millions of dollars in settlements to the victims and their families. But it has never admitted any responsibility for the disaster. It has never apologized to the people who were killed or injured. It has never taken any steps to prevent such a disaster from happening again.

Should corporations get away with murder? Should they be able to make billions of dollars for their shareholders and executives while causing the deaths of thousands of people? No, they should not. Corporations should be held accountable for their actions. They should be treated the same as individuals. If they commit a crime, they should be punished. If they cause harm, they should be held responsible.

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Senator Burns is a notorious porkbarrel politician who has spent his entire career on the backs of mining companies. He has fought to pass legislation that gives mining companies the right to mine on public lands without paying any royalties to the state or the federal government. This means that the people of Montana will be paying for the damage that mining companies are doing to the environment.

Montana is a beautiful state with some of the most pristine wilderness in the country. But Senator Burns is trying to destroy that wilderness by giving mining companies the right to mine on public lands. He is trying to turn Montana into a giant open-pit mine. He is trying to destroy the state's natural resources and its way of life.

We must stand up to Senator Burns and demand that he stop fighting for mining companies. We must demand that he protect Montana's public lands and its precious water. We must demand that he stop giving away the state's natural resources to mining companies.

Can you name the most common crime against children?

If you're a parent, you know the answer. It's neglect. Neglect is the most common crime against children. It's the failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, clothing, and medical care. Neglect can have serious and lasting effects on a child's physical, emotional, and intellectual development.

Neglect is often the result of poverty, substance abuse, or mental illness. But it can also be the result of a parent's indifference or lack of concern for their child. Neglect is a crime that is often overlooked by the legal system. It's a crime that is often punished with fines or probation, rather than jail time.

We must do more to protect children from neglect. We must make it easier for parents to get the help they need. We must make it easier for child welfare workers to identify and intervene in cases of neglect. We must make it a crime to neglect a child, and we must make sure that parents who neglect their children are punished appropriately.

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B L A C K A M E R I C A

The silent catastrophe

As the toll of AIDS-related deaths grows, the black community remains mostly unaware of the danger in its midst.

By Salim Muwakkil

In the middle of 1994, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) overtook homicide as the leading killer of African-Americans aged 25-44. While they constitute only 12 percent of the U.S. population, blacks now make up 40 percent of all AIDS cases. According to statistics compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), African-Americans are six times more likely than whites to be infected with HIV. More than 60 percent of all children with AIDS are black, as are half of all women AIDS sufferers. One out of three black male fatalities in the 25-44 age bracket is the result of AIDS.

The white gay community has succeeded in restraining the spread of HIV, and advances in the treatment and management of AIDS, such as new protease inhibitors, have led some myopic observers to hail the end of the plague.

Yet the deadly virus has continued on its devastating march through black communities, which have the least access to the nation's health care system and fewer resources to purchase these expensive drugs.

But so far, the disease's grim toll among African-Americans has been met with silence: The AIDS crisis seldom figures among the top priorities of leading black organizations, and although the CDC estimates that blacks will account for most new AIDS cases by the year 2000, few black leaders are focusing attention on this impending catastrophe.

"Our community is being ravaged by AIDS, yet most black leaders continue to treat the disease as if it's a problem of 'those' people," says Mario Cooper, former chairman of the AIDS Action Council, a Washington-based policy group. "Instead of focusing on the fact that prevention works, black leaders prefer to deny reality." In an attempt to focus attention on the disease, Cooper helped organize an ambitious conference last month at Harvard University. "We wanted to gather together some of the black leaders who have yet to show the appropriate concern for this issue, and present them with the horrifying facts," Cooper says. Sponsored by the Harvard AIDS Institute and the W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Research, the conference attracted nearly 100 black leaders, organizers and academics.

Cooper notes that organizers had invited the entire Congressional Black Caucus, leaders of every major civil rights organization, reporters and editors from leading black publications, and other influential African-Americans. Cooper says organizers chose to hold the conference at Harvard as a way to lend it both legitimacy and urgency, and perhaps to attract front-line black leaders who otherwise would be reluctant to confront the issue. Even so, many of those invited didn't show up, angering many conference participants.

AIDS prevention campaigns have always been a tough sell in the black community, for a number of reasons. For one thing, black AIDS activists argue, health agencies have not devoted enough resources to educational outreach among African-Americans. Although the CDC has long known that blacks are much more vulnerable to HIV infection than whites, it has allocated only 10 percent of its AIDS budget to communities of color, according to Norm Nickens, chair of the National Minority AIDS Council. Last year, Rep. Edolphus Towns (D-NY) called for more federal funding to fight AIDS in minority communities. "Over the last few years the AIDS populations in black and Hispanic communities has increased dramatically," Towns says. "But the money is not going where the problems are."

Intolerance has also been a factor. The initial media depiction of AIDS as a "gay plague" fed into deep homophobic attitudes that stifled many nationwide attempts to mobilize

against the virus. This has been a particular problem in the black community, whose leading organizations tend to be church-affiliated or led by clergy. "I still have a difficult time gaining access to church audiences," explains Ernest Hite of the Kupon Network, a Chicago-based AIDS outreach group with an African-American focus. Since more African-Americans can be reached at church than anywhere else, such audiences are coveted by AIDS activists. But, Hite says, "the ministers will often tell me beforehand to de-emphasize the 'homosexual stuff' when talking about the disease."

Many black AIDS educators have learned to stress the IV-drug component of transmission to soften many blacks' attitudes about the disease. More African-Americans (39 percent) contract AIDS through IV-drug use than by any other route, according to the CDC. Homosexual contact accounts for 33 percent of AIDS transmission cases among black men, and 13 percent of cases among African-Americans are the result of heterosexual contact. "It's sad to say, but many black people are more open to the idea of helping a drug addict than to helping someone who is gay," explains Sidney Thomas of the Kupon Network. Thomas says that when he first began speaking out in the black community (especially in black churches) about the threat of AIDS, he focused on IV-drug use as the cause of AIDS. But in recent years, drug abuse and increasingly violent drug commerce have so ravaged many black communities that drug abusers have become just as stigmatized as gays.

Black leaders are also wary of lending credence to the growing perception that AIDS is becoming an exclusively black disease. That perception has already provoked troubling conflicts in several countries. Last year, for example, Africans in Norway staged an angry demonstration protesting the government's public health warnings about the likelihood of Africans being carriers of the HIV virus. Ethiopian Jews staged a violent protest in Jerusalem last January after it was revealed that Israeli health officials had been summarily disposing of blood donated by Ethiopians. Haitians in New York mounted a huge rally in 1990 after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration included Haitian and sub-Saharan African immigrants on a list of high-risk groups prohibited from donating blood.

Compounding these problems is the historic distrust many African-Americans feel toward public health authorities. A recent editorial in the *American Journal of Public Health* noted that this suspicion is grounded in historical cases such as the 1932-1972 Tuskegee Syphilis Study, in which black men were used, without their knowledge or consent, as guinea pigs to study the long-term effects of untreated syphilis. "Although the Tuskegee study was hard-

ly the only cause of this distrust, it has come to symbolize unethical treatment of the poor and powerless by health authorities in the U.S.," the editorial said. "Public officials must not assume that their efforts will be viewed as good-faith attempts to reduce AIDS in communities of color."

Growing numbers of African-Americans believe that AIDS is part of a genocidal plot to wipe out the black race. Ironically, many of the same people also deride risk-reduction precautions as yet another part of the plot. For example, a host of respected research groups have endorsed needle-exchange programs to curtail the spread of HIV, but many African-American leaders condemn such programs as pretexts for pushing drugs on blacks.

Despite the continuing obduracy of black leaders, word about the AIDS crisis may finally be getting through to those most in need. In the last two years, hip-hop musicians—who

are noted (and even celebrated in some quarters) for their homophobia, misogyny and generally blasé attitude toward promiscuity—have responded much more aggressively to the growing threat of AIDS. Leading rap artists are much less reluctant than in the past to focus on the issue in their music. The Red Hot Organization, a hip-hop production company, has released several albums devoted entirely to the AIDS epidemic since the early '90s. Their latest, *America Is Dying Slowly*, features a virtual

"Who's Who" of hip-hop, including the Wu-Tang clan, Coolio, De La Soul and others. The album's lyrics explicitly confront issues of risk reduction.

UrbanAID 4 LIFEbeat, a multifaceted AIDS publicity campaign launched in the wake of the AIDS-related death of rapper Eazy E in March 1995, combines the efforts of rap musicians, journalists, producers and record executives. The group has produced a number of public service announcements, which have aired on MTV, Black Entertainment Television and the Box, that explain the dangers of unprotected sex. This October, the group staged a 12-hour benefit concert that raised more than half a million dollars for various AIDS agencies.

Despite these small victories, the toll of AIDS-related deaths in the black community is climbing while most blacks remain unaware of the danger in their midst. "When we look at how black folks internationally are being singled out for specific destruction by this virus, it's hard not to think about words like genocide," says Hite of the Kupon Network. "But since we know how to prevent the spread of HIV and our people prefer to ignore it, maybe suicide is a better word."



A mother and daughter, both HIV positive, in a New York City hospital.

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TRANSPORTATION

End of the line

*Discriminatory
mass transit
funding
has deepened
the divide
between the
country's
suburbs and
cities.*

By Linda Baker

Even the *Fortune* magazine editors who this year placed Seattle at the top of their list of "Most Livable Cities" had to admit the commute from the suburbs to downtown left something to be desired. Seattle's gridlock now rivals that of Los Angeles, a state of affairs fueled by the region's longstanding failure to design and implement effective land use and transportation strategies. When the Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (RTA) proposed massive increases in the frequency of bus and rail service and the creation of a major north-south light rail line last year, voters scuttled the initiative by a 53-47 percent margin.

"The 'burbs killed it," says Aaron Ostrom, policy director of Alt-Trans, a Washington state coalition that promotes transportation alternatives. The initiative passed by a wide

margin in Seattle, he says, but lost in the populous—and politically powerful—suburban counties.

The Seattle initiative wasn't the only proposal for a sane transit policy defeated by the Pacific Northwest's subdivisions and gated communities. Voters in Vancouver, Wash., a suburb of Portland, Ore., rejected funding last year for their section of a proposed light rail line, which would have linked suburbs such as theirs to downtown Portland. Vancouver residents opposed the light rail funding despite the fact that freeway use between their suburb and Portland has tripled in the past two decades.

This suburban-urban divide has long been the defining force in transportation politics in the United States. Auto-dependent suburbanites have stymied any shift in transportation and planning policy away from its historic focus on highways and its neglect of mass transit.

Any revival of America's inner cities will hinge on affordable and accessible mass transit. Yet in a reflection of how unimportant the nation's cities have become to the federal government, funding for public transportation has been under siege since 1980. According to a 1996 report by the Lansdowne, Va.-based Eno Transportation Foundation, federal highway funding increased from \$8.6 billion in 1980 to \$12.5 billion in 1990. Over the same decade, funding for public transit dropped from \$4 billion to \$3.2 billion.

For the 1996 fiscal year, Congress slashed transit funding by a whopping 30 percent, and hundreds of regional transit agencies lost as much as 50 percent of their federal operating assistance. This summer, Amtrak eliminated 42 routes, including service to major cities such as Dallas and Phoenix. At the same time, Congress confirmed its intention to cut off Amtrak's remaining operating subsidy—some \$392 million—by the year 2002. The transit cuts were part of this political season's pandering to the auto, which also included the elimination of national speed limits and efforts to repeal the federal gas tax.

The decisive victory of the automobile in the United States—and the entrenchment of the country's suburbanization—came in 1956, when President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Highway Act, authorizing the construction of more than 40,000 miles of highways at a cost of \$40 billion. Since then, the nation has poured hundreds of billions of dollars into the interstate highway system. Today, local, state and federal governments spend \$70 billion annually on road construction and maintenance.

This policy has displaced communities, pushed growth into open spaces, and spawned a culture of low-density development organized around the car: subdivision housing with prominent two-car garages, business parks located in

cow pastures, and shopping malls dominated by parking lots. The trend shows few signs of reversing. According to the Eno report, 23 million more people drove alone to work in 1990 than in 1980, while carpooling dropped by a third. The report attributed these numbers to the continuing movement of jobs and population to the suburbs.

Government policy encourages sprawl not only by providing new roads and other public services such as utilities and sewers, but also through tax breaks for new developments, and zoning laws that encourage housing, shops and offices to be in separate locations. The car's status as preeminent symbol of American individualism and the free market notwithstanding, auto-related expenses consume an estimated \$400 billion annually in government subsidies. Numerous studies show that only a fraction of the costs of driving—from road maintenance to foreign oil—are paid by motorists via gas taxes, vehicle registrations and the like. The bulk of the bill is covered by taxpayers at large.

Yet ironically, anti-tax pressure groups are often responsible for the defeat of mass transit projects. A case in point is Oregon Taxpayers United, an anti-tax organization with a strong rural and suburban base, which gathered enough signatures to force a vote this November on the \$375 million in state money already slated for the north-south rail line. Oregon voters passed the initiative, revoking the funding.

As the disparities between suburban sprawl and urban decay deepen, mass transit funding is emerging as a civil rights issue. Since the financial costs of owning and operating a car place auto ownership beyond the means of many Americans, it is not surprising that many transit systems serve a primarily low-income and minority constituency. Welfare reform has given the issue a new immediacy: If the government demands that people move from public assistance to work, it needs to make it cheaper and more convenient for them to get there.

Last year's federal transit cuts, however, will have the opposite effect. According to a survey of 130 transit agencies conducted in the spring by the American Public Transit Association (APTA), a Washington D.C.-based research and advocacy group, 56 percent of transit agencies responded to the cutbacks by raising fares and 48 percent by cutting services. Although transit appropriations for the 1997 fiscal year are expected to increase by \$335 million, it's unlikely that the new funds will stop the hemorrhaging because none of the money is allocated for operating assistance, the target of the majority of last year's cuts.

Last May, federal cuts forced the city of Greenville, S.C., to abruptly halt all bus service for one month; the same thing happened in Mobile, Ala., this summer. In Birmingham and Montgomery, fares doubled and service was cut in half. "The transit systems that are going under right now," says Scott Bogren of the Community Transportation Association of America, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group, "are doing so because they've never gotten anything but federal funding. They've never had state support, and

they've never had local support."

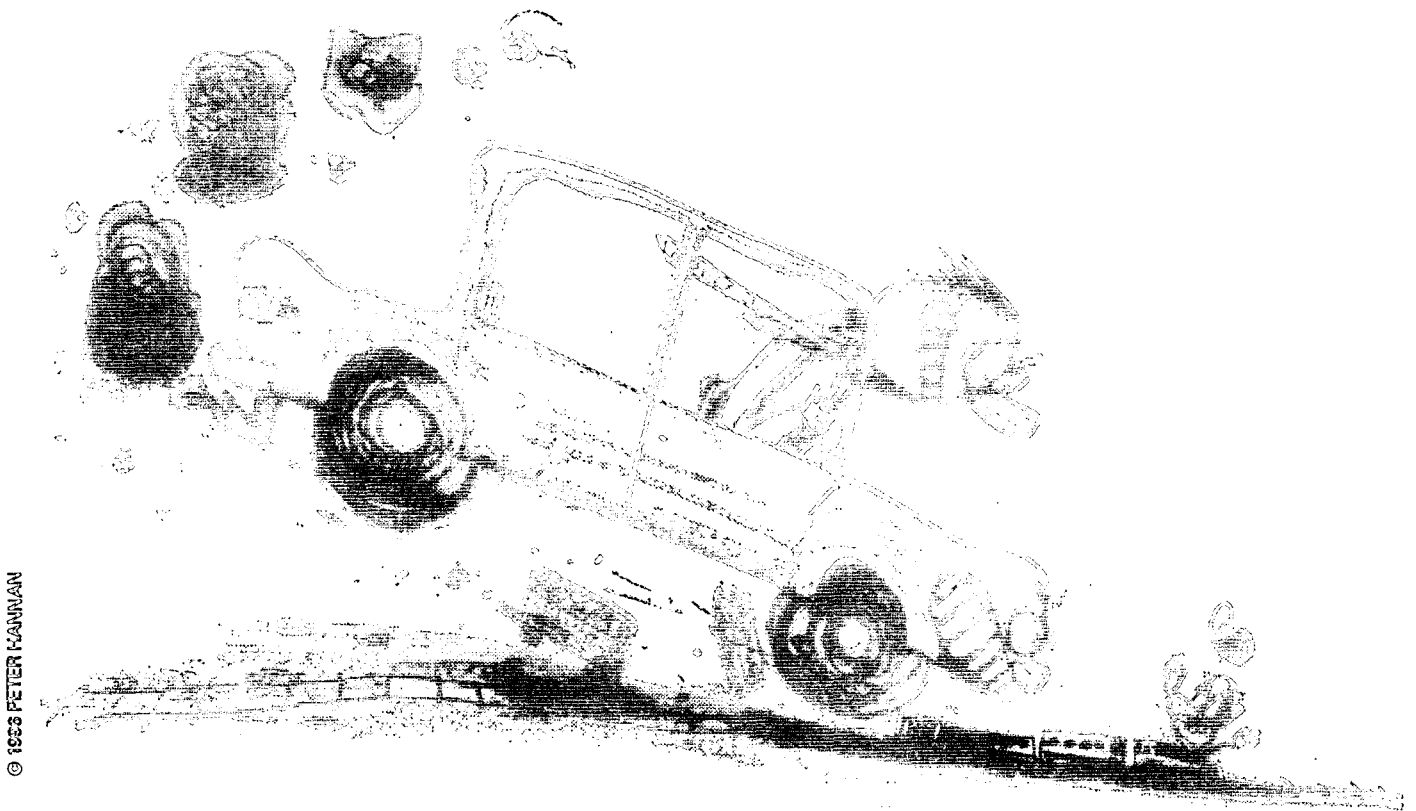
The federal cutbacks reveal an underlying pattern of discrimination in the allocation of scarce transit dollars. Despite their hostility toward public transportation projects, bedroom communities receive a disproportionate share of transit monies at the expense of urban areas. A particularly egregious example is the distribution of funds by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). The MTA bus system, which serves mainly low-income minority workers, carries 90 percent of the system's passengers, yet receives less than one-third of MTA funding; by contrast, the commuter rail system, which connects the white suburbs to Los Angeles' downtown business district, carries 6 percent of passengers while receiving 70 percent of funding.

"There are two separate transit networks," says Bogren. "Bus systems for minorities and the inner city, and rail for white suburbs. They're separate and unequal."

Last year, a coalition of grassroots groups led by the Labor/Community Strategy Center filed a class-action lawsuit against the MTA on behalf of the system's 350,000 bus riders. The MTA will probably adopt a consent decree addressing many of the plaintiffs' concerns, including putting more buses on the street and lowering or freezing bus fares.

The lawsuit is important precisely because two-tier public transportation systems are the norm across the country. In New York City, for example, subway fares rose twice as much as commuter rail fares last year; adding insult to injury, cuts in state funding for the city's subway and bus systems occurred just as the majority of New York state transit systems were receiving increases. Portland, which is nationally recognized for its urban planning and transportation projects, offers another egregious example of discriminatory transit funding. The Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon captured millions of dollars in special federal and state appropriations to help build Portland's light rail project linking the downtown core and suburbs, but it reduced the frequency of bus service and raised fares for monthly passes when the city's federal mass transit funding was cut by half last year to \$2 million.

Ultimately, the battle to shift transportation priorities away from the suburbs is a battle to use mass transit to redirect growth and revitalize our nation's cities. Despite the inequities associated with commuter rail, projects like Portland's eastside light rail, not to mention the renovation of numerous train stations across the country, do illustrate how public transportation projects can spur economic development. These projects have found an unlikely ally in the Cato Institute, which recently released a report entitled "Conservatives and Mass Transit: Is it Time for a New Look?" Authors Paul M. Weyrich and William S. Lind urge suburbanites to consider mass transit as a means to boost economic growth, pointing out that mass transit in this country benefits suburbanites more than the urban poor.



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Anti-sprawl forces also possess leverage in the form of the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act (ISTEA), which President Bush signed into law in 1991 when the Highway Act came up for reauthorization. Supported by both mass transit advocates and state rights advocates, this landmark legislation allows highway funds to be used for mass transit, rail and bicycle projects, and encourages local control over transportation policy. Cities such as Portland, Roanoke, Va., and Savannah, Ga., offer models of how local control can work. In these cities, regional governments have emphasized citizen participation by giving mass transit advocates the opportunity to suggest alternatives to road construction and by involving the public in the early stages of the planning and design process. In the past few years, millions of highway dollars have been funneled into ISTEA's Enhancement programs, which include bus, bicycle and pedestrian projects.

ISTEA's reauthorization next year is threatened not only by federal cutbacks, but also by a mammoth road lobby composed of the big three automakers, domestic oil companies, highway-construction companies and status quo-inclined bureaucrats. "Highways aren't everything, they're the only thing," said Montana State Department of Transportation Director Marvin Dye at a U.S. Department of Transportation ISTEA reauthorization meeting last spring. During reauthorization hearings held this summer by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, William Fay of the American High-

way Users Alliance argued, "Since we do not believe mass transit systems serve a clear national transportation purpose, we recommend that Congress eliminate the mass transit account of the Highway Trust Fund." Washington State House Transportation Committee Chair Karen Schmidt—a Republican quoted in the Northwest Bicycle Federation newsletter as saying "the best way to deal with bicyclists is to get a bigger bumper for your car"—is one of many legislators across the country calling for the elimination of ISTEA Enhancement and Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality programs.

While these extreme attitudes are unlikely to prevail, the Republican-controlled 105th Congress will no doubt continue to pare away at the existing subsidies for mass transit. As states are forced to shoulder more of the burden for transportation funding and as urban planning processes become more decentralized, proponents of affordable transit need to be ready to fight local and regional planning battles and to challenge institutions steeped in a car-based culture.

As the civil rights lawsuit in Los Angeles suggests, the importance of mass transit ultimately resides in its ability to create real communities. After all, few social bonds have been forged from the confines of a single-occupancy vehicle. As Amtrak President Thomas Downs put it at a conference in Washington, D.C., last summer: "Highways don't bring people together. It's interconnected rail and bus networks that create a community of place, a center for the city." ◀

Linda Baker is a freelance writer based in Portland, Ore.

L A B O R

The young and the restless

*The AFL-CIO's
Union Summer
may herald
a new
involvement
of students
with the
labor
movement.*

By David Moberg

Last summer Ed Felton, a New York college student, worked in a theater troupe on the resort-lined beaches of Hilton Head, S.C. But Felton was not there to amuse vacationers. He was part of the AFL-CIO's Union Summer, helping workers in South Carolina's tourist industry organize a union for the first time.

Tapping the creativity, ideas and enthusiasm of his Union Summer "army," Operating Engineers organizer David Miller says his union carried out a protracted "war" against the recalcitrant Melrose Club, a posh Hilton Head resort. Felton and fellow Union Summeristas staged guerrilla theater performances, confronting well-off vacationers with parallels between the plantations of yesteryear and today's resorts. They shared tales of resort exploitation, explaining to guests that Melrose does not give

workers the 17 percent service "gratuity" tacked onto bills. The vivid demonstration of outside support buoyed workers and—combined with the union's legal challenges to management tactics—forced Melrose to sign a decent contract.

"The experience helped to dislodge misconceptions I had about unions," Felton says. "Before this summer, I thought of them as overly bureaucratic organizations where the workers themselves didn't play a part."

Now back studying sociology at the State University of New York-New Paltz, Felton and two other Union Summer veterans helped found a Student Labor Action Coalition on campus. Besides planning campus events, such as film screenings, to try to educate a student body that's been largely indifferent to labor, the coalition has approached local unions with offers of support. It will also take part in national labor campaigns, such as pressuring The Gap and other clothing companies to guarantee the rights of the maquiladora workers who assemble the

clothes, and supporting the strawberry pickers whom the United Farmworkers are trying to organize in California. This October, several coalition members joined the overflow crowd of 1,700 at the New York kick-off of a series of teach-ins designed to foster an alliance between organized labor and university campuses.

As its effects ripple outward, Union Summer—one of AFL-CIO President John Sweeney's campaign planks when he was running for office last year—continues to prove far more successful than even its supporters had imagined. Nearly 1,000 summer interns completed programs of three weeks or more, working at 15 sites with 27 different unions. Although inspired by the 1964 Freedom Summer of the civil rights movement, Union Summer was quite different. "Our model was not the elite bringing attention to the forgotten and oppressed," Union Summer director Andy Levin says. "We were looking to inject a large dose of class consciousness into the politics of the next generation." Union Summer participants' idealism was "mixed with a healthy dose of self-interest and solidarity," Levin notes, since many of the participants came from working-class families and saw themselves as likely victims of the long-term trend toward greater economic inequality.

Labor strategists had initially hoped mainly to transform young people's thinking and recruit future organizers. They were pleasantly surprised at how much valuable work the volunteers did. "Union Summer participants not only did phone banking but made house visits, organized demonstrations, and made a difference in campaigns," Levin says. "This was far beyond what I had hoped." The young people energized local unions, bringing fresh ideas about tactics, creating new songs and chants, and inspiring new organizing cam-

paigns. This prompted some unions to hire interns to continue working after their three-week stint.

"When we first heard about it, I viewed it as really an educational program for young people," says Tracey Abman, an organizer for AFSCME, the public employees union, which deployed Union Summer interns in its organizing and contract campaigns of private mental health workers in Illinois. "But there were benefits we hadn't counted on. It's helpful for workers, when they face an anti-union employer, to know they're not standing alone."

Old hands in the labor movement were startled that the AFL-CIO was able to pull off the new project so quickly. Indeed, Levin was worried when Union Summer was initiated in February that there wouldn't be enough volunteers. Instead, the federation received more than 3,500 applications, mostly from students attending non-elite schools. Of the participants, nearly three-fifths were women, over half were people of color, and 42 percent came from union families.

As with any diverse group of young people plunged into an intense, unfamiliar situation, predictable conflicts arose over racial and sexual tensions, personality clashes, and unease with the work. Though the unions told the students to avoid arrest, some were swept up in the enthusiasm of protests and ended up getting arrested along with the workers they were supporting. A few ended up in precarious situations. The Chicago police, for instance, accused one white volunteer of looking for drugs when he was organizing in a poor black neighborhood.

Participants' criticisms were remarkably mild. There was some disorganization resulting from the rushed implementation. A few participants also complained that three weeks wasn't long enough or that they didn't have enough contact with workers. Yet overall, Union Summer volunteers—who were paid a modest stipend and provided room and board—were pleased with the experience. Nearly three-fifths said they might apply to the AFL-CIO's Organizing Institute, which trains organizers, and 20 have already gone through at least part of the training. Others, like Ed Felton, are beginning to change the political climate on campus, making the labor movement a social cause that attracts young people for the first time in many decades.

Naomi Ward, a Macalester College senior from a Teamster family, returned from Union Summer to become more involved in politics and union work. She is currently helping to build support among Minnesota unionists for Mexican maquiladora workers on the border. "I was definitely inspired by the summer," she says. "My whole life plan has basically changed. I had no idea what the global economy meant. When we did protests at Niketown about Indonesian workers, these rich people were shouting 'get a job' and calling us 'communists' and 'pinkos.' It was amazing how much people didn't want us to interrupt their little world."



Levin continues to work with Union Summer veterans to keep them active at their colleges. The new

Union Summer participants protest last June in support of Detroit newspaper strikers.

solidarity on campus is only one promising sign of a potentially broad-based public involvement with workers' issues. For example, a new Chicago-based organization of religious leaders, the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, is starting a campaign to help low-paid workers in the poultry industry. The organization is supporting the largely Guatemalan workforce that has gone on strike at the Case Farms chicken processing plant in Morganton, N.C.

The AFL-CIO and other unions have created allied student groups in the past, such as Frontlash. But these groups were narrowly based and carefully orchestrated, and they were never very effective. Labor leaders have often been afraid that broader social movements, including efforts to mobilize their own members, could get out of their control. Their fears are not unfounded: When AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka enthusiastically commended Bill Clinton as a "pro-labor" president at the New York teach-in, he was shocked to hear many boos. But such risks are essential. "Part of doing something is taking chances," Levin argues. "You can't control things too tightly."

If Union Summer is repeated next year, and the enthusiasm so far makes that likely, Levin would like to recruit more young union members and possibly link the program to a coordinated national organizing campaign. But even repeating the model used this summer would be worthwhile. Among its many achievements, Union Summer '96 has helped create a new image of unions. As Levin notes with satisfaction, "one of the myths Union Summer laid to rest is that there is this great gulf dividing students and workers." Since a college degree is one of the biggest social divides among workers in this country, that accomplishment alone is worth applauding.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

A wolf in sheep's clothing

R

eaching a new low in its unscrupulous drive to shape public opinion, the tobacco-and-food conglomerate Philip Morris hired a public relations firm to operate Contributions Watch, a phony campaign watchdog group. Before being unmasked recently as a tool of Philip Morris, Contributions Watch (CW) tried to pass itself off as an independent non-profit. But CW's real agenda is to attack tobacco's political enemies and, in the words of one internal memo, smear the "hidden, undisclosed consumerist agendas" of genuine public interest groups like the Consumers Union and Ralph Nader's Public Interest Research Group.

Philip Morris money flowed to Contributions Watch via the State Affairs Co. (SAC), a Washington, D.C.-based lobbying firm that prides itself on its ability to remain "anonymous." According to internal SAC documents leaked to the newsletters *PR Watch* and

Counterpunch, Contributions Watch sought to position itself in the minds of the media and the general public as "the leading authority on money and politics in the states," and to groom CW executive director Warren Miller as "an expert source and guide to investigative reporters, editors and opinion writers." A May 1996 draft of CW's business plan noted that tracking "trial lawyer contributions in the states is slated to occupy most of CW's research time over the next six months."

Trial lawyers, of course, are the bane of tobacco executives' existence. Philip Morris is currently a major force behind "tort reform"—the big business campaign to hamstring the attorneys who sue companies to pay for the deaths, pain and suffering caused by their products. An internal SAC document, citing a *National Journal* article, claims that tobacco companies "have faced an explosion of litigation from 1993 to 1994. 'Tobacco makers spent \$600 million on legal fees in

1990 and the annual figure has climbed since then.' ... As a barrage of class action lawsuits hit cigarette manufacturers, ... Philip Morris' strategy is to challenge all efforts to regulate smoking through the courts."

As Contributions Watch began its effort to place stories in the media, it faced an obvious dilemma: How do you pose as an idealistic crusader for full disclosure while simultaneously hiding your own special interest agenda? To resolve this conundrum, the organization's legal advisor Henry Hart outlined a two-track media strategy: one approach for spoon-feeding stories to "unequivocal supporters," and another for dealing with reporters who asked real questions.

On May 17, Hart wrote a letter to Warren Miller informing him that "the only document which is currently a matter of public record concerning Contributions Watch is the Articles of Incorporation. ... Those articles do not reveal the name of the directors or officers of any person other than myself."

Hart gave Miller a script for deflecting reporters' questions, adding that "the above responses are directed at the situation where you cannot preclude the possibility that the person making the inquiry has interests hostile to Contributions Watch. I understand that if you receive an inquiry from an unequivocal supporter, you may choose to provide more detailed responses."

If asked about any relationship between SAC and CW, the script called for Miller to downplay the ties by saying, "I worked for the [Federal Elections Commission] ... and then worked for a time at the SAC as a research wonk. Back last year, I approached the SAC with the idea of spinning me off as a non-profit organization. I'm happy to say that CW is now an independent organization with our own offices and own board of directors."

What Miller was not supposed to mention was the fact that he is paid by SAC with Philip Morris money and files

Crossing a new frontier in corporate lobbying, Philip Morris bankrolled a phony campaign finance reform organization.

By John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton

weekly "CW activities reports" to SAC partner David McCloud, his de facto boss.

This summer, CW released a report entitled "Best and Worst Campaign Disclosure Agencies," which evaluated how each state government handled campaign funding disclosure. In his June 17 report to McCloud, Miller wrote that the report, "has been an unqualified success. It was carried on AP, The Hotline, and at least 20 state newspapers. The *Miami Herald* editorialized on it Sunday. I am scheduled to give an interview with NPR today."

The report established Contributions Watch in the minds of many as a legitimate non-profit citizen advocacy group with no hidden agenda. "We continue to receive calls regarding [the study]," Miller stated in his June 24 report to McCloud, which also noted that he was feeding information to *Wall Street Journal* reporter Glenn Simpson for an upcoming piece. "Please let me know if you need an invoice which details the hours spent on behalf of the *Wall Street Journal* article," Miller wrote.

The *Journal* story, which ran on July 16, described CW's second report, entitled "Off the Radar Screen," as "the most comprehensive examination of trial-lawyer giving to date." That report documented contributions of more than \$100 million by trial lawyers in state and federal races over the last seven years. As hoped, the story made no mention of Philip Morris or SAC, noting simply that the study was "funded by industry backers of tort reform."

Another reporter, Carolyn Lochhead of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, was even more pliant. Miller spent all summer spoonfeeding her material for a cover story that appeared in the September 23 issue of *The Weekly Standard*. Lochhead proved to be such an "unequivocal supporter" that SAC worked with her directly. Yet her article never mentioned SAC's role in her story, or the tobacco money behind the whole SAC/CW operation.

On August 9, SAC's John Davis sent a memo and a copy of the trial lawyer data to Neal Cohen of the P.R. firm APCO & Associates, which had been hired by SAC to give strategic and tactical advice. Copies of the memo also went to Philip Morris executives and lawyers. Cohen responded with a memo four days later outlining a strategy for packaging and releasing the data to the media.

"In considering uses of the current Contributions Watch data," Cohen wrote, "our primary goals have been to do the following: Get the data out in the public domain quickly and with credibility prior to the elections. Utilize existing entities to ensure that the data has 'legs' beyond its initial release. Influence the debate about and understanding of the trial bar's role in the political process."

To achieve these goals, Cohen recommended "that CW release a state-by-state abstract of its information, either through a press release or through a press conference after Labor Day. CW should provide information with minimum of interpretation or commentary. ... [In] addition to the CW release, we believe that [the American Tort Reform Associa-

tion] ... should be encouraged to put the CW information on the Internet."

Cohen recommended a "roll-out of CW information by state," so, for instance, "CW holds a press conference with [Alabama Voters Against Lawsuits Abuse] to release the specifics in Alabama. ... In-state follow-up by local activists including: letters to the editor; opinion columns; distribution of materials to key elected officials."

In his August 15 activities report to McCloud, Miller worried that coordinating its activities so publicly with tort reform groups would undermine CW's facade of independence. "CW is at a critical point right now," he wrote. "With the success of our 'Best and Worst' study, we have begun to establish ourselves in this field. ... However, when the trial lawyer stories currently in the pipeline are released, CW will become extremely vulnerable to attacks that we are nothing more than an arm of the tort-reform industry."

Of course, such attacks would be right on target. On September 13, SAC's David McCloud sent Keith Teel at Covington & Burling, Philip Morris' law firm, "our two most recent studies as well as our invoice number 231 covering services conducted on behalf of [the firm] for the period August 1, 1996 through August 31, 1996." The one-month tab? \$65,547.86.

John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton edit *PR Watch*, and are the authors of *Toxic Sludge is Good for You! Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry* (Common Courage Press). This article is adapted from the Third Quarter, 1996 issue of *PR Watch*.

BECOMING CITIZENS IN THE AGE OF TELEVISION

How Americans Challenged the Media and Seized Political Initiative during the Iran-Contra Debate

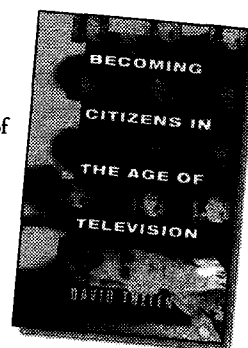
DAVID THELEN

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I N T H E A R T S

The last picture show

The Soviet Union produced more women directors than any other nation, but now that Russia is back on the map, they, like their male comrades, find the marketplace is no respecter of art or ambition. Hollywood movies dominate the plummeting number of theaters in Russia, and a good many people stay home to watch pirated videos of *Mission Impossible* and its ilk.

A program of films by Russian women gives a glimpse of what will be lost if the country's film industry withers away.

By Pat Dowell

The impossible mission of Russian filmmakers today is to get a movie made. The state subsidizes only one or two films a year instead of, as before, more than 100. And after the final edit comes the really hard part—booking the movie into a theater and getting people to buy tickets.

A glimpse of what might be lost if the Russian film industry withers away can be seen in a program of films entitled "Sisters: Films by Russian Women, the Best of

Three Decades," which is traveling through the United States this year and next. The eight features and two short films show the breadth of work by Russian women. The selection ranges from Niyole Adomenaite's *House Built on Sand*, a delicate 1991 tragedy about cruelty among a group of privileged young Soviets summering in a Chekhovian idyll of beauty and boredom on the eve of World War II, to *Elixir* (1995), a handcrafted experimental work. The latter combines painted archival material and staged drama with a neo-Gothic menagerie of dragons and wizards in a hallucinatory meditation on the tales of E.T.A. Hoffman. Needless to say, Irina Evteeva, *Elixir*'s young director, has already discovered that there is no place for her film in a market that pays Sylvester Stallone \$20 million for buffing up and pulling a trigger.

Evteeva and four of her colleagues made a few appearances with their films in the series' initial American engagements. And, oh yes, tagging along was a man—Elem Klimov, who is one of the most distinguished figures in Russian film. He is often called the architect of perestroika in the cinema because of his assertive leadership of the directors' union during the glasnost era. Perhaps because of his stature as a director, Klimov's female colleagues tended to defer to him at the panel in Washington, D.C., causing some consternation among the audience. "I'd like to hear a woman speak on this matter," piped up an anonymous viewer after the umpteenth question thrown Klimov's way. It may not have been much solace to the feminists in the audience when the women directors did speak up: All insisted they had no interest in feminism or in talking about being women in their profession. "There is nothing to discuss," director Svetlana Proskurina insisted more than once. There was more than a little truth in Klimov's quip to the audience: "You see, I am the only feminist here."

Klimov was with the tour as a tribute to his wife, director Larisa Shepitko, who died in a car accident at the age of 40 in 1979. Klimov's touching and informative 20-minute portrait of her and her work, titled *Larisa*, is included in the tour, along with two of Shepitko's most celebrated films, *Wings* and *The Ascent*. The former is a straightforward 1966 psychological portrait of a female World War II pilot whose pinioned mind tries to take flight once more; with its unflinchingly sad glimpse of a woman deflected from her life's work, the movie was in many ways the highlight of the program. It certainly embodies a concern for the effects of repression that feminists will find moving and astute. *The Ascent* contrasts the reactions of two men, Russian partisans, to Nazi capture in World War II. Released in 1976, the film is in the same mold as *Wings*—both are profound measures of human endurance—but it is a drama of such intensity that it enters the risky realm of the spiritual.



The lyrical period of Soviet cinema is also represented by another film in the series, Kira Muratova's *Brief Encounters*, which was made in 1967 but shelved for two decades. A romantic triangle in black and white—and several shades of philosophical gray—the film stars the idolized singer Vladimir Visotsky (who brings along his guitar) as the object of the affections of both the character played by Muratova herself and a dewy-eyed young girl. Muratova's determination to show these independent spirits weighing questions of love and freedom touched an official nerve and kept the film out of circulation until 1986. By that time, when the gates of glasnost had swung wide open, Soviet film style had changed.

The Asthenic Syndrome (1989) created another controversy for Muratova. It symbolically charts the crackup of a rigidly controlled society through a series of dispirited but often bitterly funny vignettes, beginning with a movie-within-a-movie. The film was a remarkably modernist departure from the sensitive sociological dramas which were still considered innovative in the '80s. Typical of these is the late Dinara Asanova's 1983 film *Teenagers*. The Soviet Union's growing problem with youthful crime was a touchy subject for a movie, but Asanova was eventually vindicated with a state prize. She used non-professionals and an actual correctional camp as the setting and model for her story of bad boys and their patient counselor. Filmed in the bracing greens and blues and yellows of the countryside, *Teenagers* puts its suddenly beautiful delinquents through a series of tests that affirms the possibility of their salvation.

The days in which Russia's delinquent teenagers would be sent to a camp in the

countryside instead of consigned to prison are long gone—just one more indication that these films belong to the past. What does the future hold for Russian filmmakers? Well, one of them, Alexandra Sviridova, is living in the United States and working on Steven Spielberg's project recording the memories of Holocaust survivors. Of the others, a few have turned to television work, but most seem to be preparing projects and waiting for money and a market that may never materialize.

Even Elem Klimov appears to float in a state of extended anticipation, expecting that a huge budget will turn up somehow for his dream project, a film version of Mikhail Bulgakov's novel about the temptations of the devil, *The Master and Margarita*. If the architect of kino-perestroika cannot find investors, it looks bleak for directors of less exalted reputation. So see the movies of "Sisters" before they become relics of a truly lost world.

◀ "Sisters: Films by Russian Women" will tour the United States through 1997, and after the tour some of the films will be released on video. The program is playing in Pittsburgh through November 30, and then in Baltimore through December 27. In January, the films will be shown in St. Louis, Austin and Houston. They are also booked next year in Rochester and Ithaca, New York. For further information, call the International Film Circuit at (212) 779-0660.

Alexandra Svetskaia in
Kira Muratova's *Asthenic Syndrome*

I N P R I N T

Sweeney's better half

By Chris Seymour

There's a visionary new leader of the AFL-CIO who wants to revitalize trade unions as a social movement—to organize the unorganized and advance the interests of all workers, not just the relatively few who are already union members.

And there's a business unionist who soothingly tells a socially responsible business group, "We want to help American business compete in the world and create new wealth for your shareholders and your employees. ... It is time for business and labor to see each other as natural allies, not natural enemies."

Both John Sweeneys collaborated on his new book, *America Needs a Raise*. The book, written with David Kusnet, lays out an ambitious vision for a revitalized labor movement while at the same time waxing nostalgic about the post-World War II "social contract." Under that unwritten agreement, management accepted unionization and provided a rising standard of living and a measure of job security in exchange for stable, peaceful labor relations. The second Sweeney seems to ignore the ways the postwar pact helped demobilize union members, contributing to the decline in the labor movement that the first Sweeney hopes to reverse.

America Needs a Raise is part of the new AFL-CIO leadership's efforts to communicate its vision to the broader public—one of the things the Sweeney team has done very successfully. According to Janine Jackson of the media watch group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, there have been significantly more—and more sympathetic—labor stories in major newspapers since Sweeney took office a little more than a year ago.

But the changes at the AFL-CIO have not just been P.R. coups. In the past year, the federation has spearheaded a campaign that forced a Republican-controlled Congress to raise the minimum wage. It has created a new \$20 million organizing department to support member unions' innovative organizing efforts, such as the United Farm Workers'

campaign to organize 20,000 strawberry workers. And it launched the Union Summer campaign, which involved roughly 1,000 young people in workers' struggles.

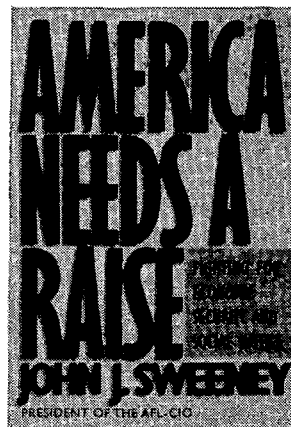
Yet, ultimately, the labor movement will have to choose between the conflicting cooperative and combative impulses of the two John Sweeneys.

Sweeney grew up in the Bronx in the 1940s and '50s. He was the son of Irish immigrants, his mother a domestic worker and his father a bus driver. At the time, the Transport Workers Union was winning regular raises that allowed the Sweeneys to buy a house and take additional vacation days, which the family often spent at the beach. So Sweeney's nostalgia for the period is understandable:

Strong unions ... helped ... my own [parents] get a fair share of the wealth they produced. Business people knew if they paid their workers fairly and plowed some of their profits back into their communities, they could count on loyal employees and loyal consumers. ... Under the postwar social contract, most people had good reason to believe that their work was respected and rewarded.

But the labor movement's vision for the future cannot be a return to the good old days. First, as Sweeney himself acknowledges, those days were not so good for many people. African-Americans were excluded from well-paying jobs—and often from trade unions. And women lost their well-paying defense industry jobs to returning veterans and found themselves either in lower-wage work or lives of domestic desperation in the mushrooming suburbs.

Second, the postwar labor-management accord was based on economic and political arrangements that no longer exist. It grew out of the wartime mobilization, as the Roosevelt administration convinced business to ease its opposition to unions in exchange for the labor peace needed for all-out production. The accord was solidified in the postwar era when U.S. firms could produce for the domestic market without being undercut by foreign competition and could thus easily pay steadily increasing wages. (And the not-so-fine print on the "contract" included support for the Cold War, which labor signed on to lock, stock and barrel—from advocating massive military spending, to covertly backing employer-friendly anti-communist unions overseas, to supporting the Vietnam War.)



**America Needs a Raise:
Fighting for Economic
Security and Social
Justice**

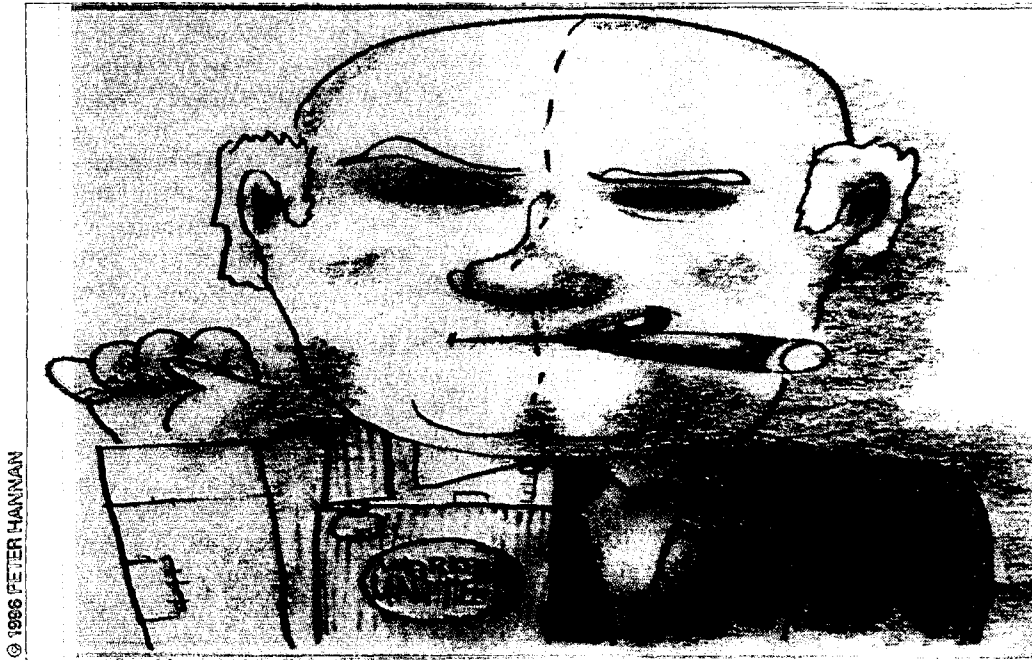
By John J. Sweeney
with David Kusnet
Houghton Mifflin
167 pp., \$18.95

Finally, corporate America accepted the bargain because it put a lid on the militancy of the labor movement, which was threatening the orderly production of profit. It helped turn unions into service providers for their members, rather than the social movement Sweeney wants to reinvigorate. Grievances, for example, became a matter of filing a form

mate, and Sweeney's team at the AFL-CIO is strategizing about ways to apply their experiences on a large scale: organizing all the workers in whole industries (like steel in the '30s—and perhaps strawberries in the '90s) or all the workers in a city or region.

That will require energizing and training ordinary union

members to act as organizers and winning public support for union campaigns as crusades for workers' basic human rights. These are achievable goals. For example, this spring, United Mine Workers members came out of the mines to organize janitors in Johnstown, Pa., utility workers in New Haven, W. Va., and public employees in Gallup, N.M. And last month, community and religious leaders organized a sit-in at a Boston-area curtain maker in support of workers the company had fired for organizing a union. As the sit-in protesters were arrested, Sweeney and other supporters demonstrated out-



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instead of shutting down the assembly line and heading to the supervisor's office en masse.

Although Sweeney prefers cooperation to conflict, he does acknowledge that before trying to win a new social contract, labor's first task is "building a stronger, smarter labor movement." That mainly means organizing the unorganized, which was the primary plank in Sweeney's campaign platform when he ran for AFL-CIO president. It is perhaps the most daunting task the labor movement faces.

The AFL-CIO Organizing Department estimates that unions would have to spend \$300 million a year on organizing just to maintain their current 15 percent share of the workforce. To grow by 1 percent a year would cost \$1.3 billion. Unions now spend between \$100 and \$150 million a year on organizing—about 3 percent of the \$5 billion in annual revenues the Organizing Department estimates unions take in. Sweeney's goal could thus require that member unions spend 30 percent of their revenues on organizing. Will unions cut back on servicing existing contracts? Massively raise dues? Lower leaders' salaries? Will they sell their significant real estate holdings in Washington, leave skeleton staffs in the capital and direct the savings to organizing? If these numbers are correct, the AFL-CIO leadership is going to have to face—and get member unions to face—some intractable dilemmas.

But of course, as Sweeney points out, it's not necessarily how much you spend on organizing, it's how you spend it. Some unions have had success organizing in this difficult cli-

side. Less than a week later, the firm recognized the union and reinstated the fired workers with back pay.

But it will take time to bring large numbers of rank-and-filers and community members into organizing campaigns. Union members, like most of us, don't have a lot of free time, and most have come to think of their union as an agency that takes their money for services rendered rather than a cause to work for. And public support flows more easily to people and organizations that have sunk roots in a community. It will be necessary, therefore, for the AFL-CIO to offer more than rhetoric in support of long-term initiatives that seek to strengthen those roots, such as the Los Angeles Manufacturing Action Project (LAMAP). The project has built up real credibility in the city's Latino community and has a well thought out multi-union plan to organize Los Angeles' entire manufacturing workforce. So far, however, only the Teamsters have signed on to the plan (LAMAP's community ties had helped Teamster-represented tortilla delivery drivers win a contract fight). The federation should be kicking in money to LAMAP and, more importantly, encouraging member unions to work together on the project.

Organizing U.S. workers today, when global corporations can go anywhere to buy cheap labor, also demands a level of cooperation across borders only imagined in the "Internationale." Some unions—for example, the Teamsters, UNITE (the textile and garment workers' union), and the United Electrical Workers—have had some success in

"A constructive independent electoral strategy is available, and it's high time we came together again, as a movement, to build it. The elements of that strategy are: a simple, attractive message about who we are; a practical program reflecting our values; trained people to run campaigns and ballot initiatives; and some ongoing organization whose support and sanction can keep candidates honest and keep us in touch with them. These elements are easy enough to assemble, assuming the resources can be found. And the resources can be found if we agree to look for them together, beginning immediately after the elections. We should do that."

—Bruce Colburn, Secy-Treas, Milwaukee AFL-CIO, member of Progressive Milwaukee/New Party, and Joel Rogers, NP National Chair, in the *Nation*.

NEW PARTY

The New Party is a federation of local labor-community political organizations that are working to elect pro-union and progressive candidates to local and state office. The NP's focus is on issues like the living wage/minimum wage; fusion voting and campaign finance reform; "greening" the economy; and starting-gate equality for children. NP affiliates have won 110 of their first 160 races contested, and have helped pass living wage ordinances, win campaign finance initiatives, and stop privatization of public services.

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joint organizing campaigns with Latin American unions. But the AFL-CIO has a long way to go before it lives down its unsavory international history, and Sweeney's capable new international affairs director, Barbara Shailor, has not yet been able to hire her own staff to replace the old guard of Cold Warriors.

Changing the nation's political climate would make a major contribution to organizing. The federation spent the unprecedented sum of \$35 million on this year's elections. The immediate goal: punishing the most vulnerable of the Republicans who had voted consistently against workers' interests. Although the GOP still controls the House, the federation says 19 of the Republican Congress members it targeted were defeated, and claims victory in 48 of the 118 House, Senate and gubernatorial races in which it was involved.

But corporations will always win the political money race: Business donations in this election cycle totaled \$242 million at last count, according to the Center for Responsive Politics. If the Democrats the AFL-CIO helped elect end up selling them out for corporate campaign contributions, will labor be willing to walk away from them? It will take a lot of tough decisions like the one made by UNITE in the South Carolina Senate race. The union refused to back Democrat Elliot Close, part owner of a notoriously anti-union textile firm, against Neanderthal incumbent Strom Thurmond, and Thurmond won. Maybe next time South Carolina Democrats will take labor's concerns more seriously.

That's where the AFL-CIO's long-term political goal comes in: building, as Sweeney puts it in his book, "an independent movement that mobilizes working people, raises their issues in public debate, and brings their concerns before public officials—every year, not just election years, and all year round, not just during campaign seasons."

Building such a movement will require a genuine third party so that there is somewhere to go when the Democrats ditch labor. But although he notes that cultivating relationships with Democrats has been a "largely ineffective strategy," Sweeney is at best indifferent to initiatives like the new Labor Party, which has backing from national, regional and local labor bodies representing over a million people, and the New Party, which has won—often with labor support—110 out of the 160 state and local races in which its candidates have run.

Today's Democratic Party is not the same as the street-level organization that sent a teenaged Sweeney around the Bronx in a sound truck with his father's union friends to get out the vote. Nor are today's corporate chieftains interested in a new deal with labor. The labor movement can ill afford to chase yesterday's dream. Today's political and economic realities demand that Sweeney show Americans more of his combative side.

Chris Seymour, a Brooklyn-based journalist and folksinger, was news editor of *ITT's* onetime rival, the *Guardian*.

Onward, Christian soldiers

By Paul Hockenos

“At least none of us are circumcised,” a Slovenian journalist joked to me uneasily as we crossed the front line from Bosnian government-controlled to Bosnian Serb-controlled territory in the winter of 1994. At the time, ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims was in full swing, and foreign journalists were not above suspicion of being or sheltering Muslims.

The most common way to identify a person's ethnicity in Bosnia is by his or her name: Most family names are easily identified as Serbian, Muslim or Croatian. But some names are common to two or all three groups, and many Bosnians are the offspring of mixed marriages. And since there are no immediately apparent physical differences between Bosnia's three major peoples, falsified papers could easily conceal a person's “real” ethnicity. There's only one sure way to tell a male Bosnian Muslim from an Orthodox Christian Serb or a Catholic Croat: by his penis. Muslims are circumcised, Christians (in the Balkans) aren't. During the war, it was common practice for Bosnian Serb—or Bosnian Croat—troops to order men to drop their pants for purposes of ethnic identification.

When I politely told my usually well-informed colleague that American men are routinely circumcised at birth, he couldn't conceal his shock. In European countries, which don't circumcise, the practice is seen as a foreign ritual performed by “non-Western peoples” like Muslims and Jews.

The importance of circumcision in the Bosnian war is telling, and not just as part of the link between gender and ethnic identity that has led to shocking sexual war crimes like castration, mutilation and rape. Technically, the term “ethnic cleansing” is a misnomer: Serbs, Croats and Bosnians all belong to the same ethnic group. They're Slavs, descendants of Slavic tribes that migrated to the region in the sixth and seventh centuries. All three speak a common Slavic language. The defining difference between the three groups is religion: Serbs and Croats adopted Christianity in the ninth century, while the Muslims of Bosnia converted to Islam during Ottoman rule.

If the only factor that differentiates the Slavic inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina is religion, then it would seem logical to argue that the term “ethnic” in “ethnic cleansing” is a

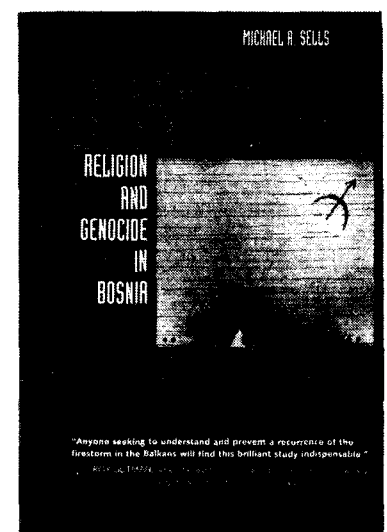
euphemism for “religious.” Indeed, the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat nationalists openly boasted that they were fighting to protect Christian Europe from fundamentalist Islam. Both armies went out of their way to destroy every mosque in territory they captured. In unspoken collusion, the Christian regimes in Croatia and Serbia singled out the Bosnian Muslims for elimination because of their faith.

As true as this explanation rings, it is not strictly correct. The war in Bosnia was one of territorial aggression, orchestrated and actively supported by expansionist regimes in Serbia and Croatia in order to divide the country between them. But the central questions remain unanswered: Why was the conflict so violent? How could radical leaders so effectively rally people to rape and massacre their neighbors? And why, in a strictly territorial war, did genocide occur at all?

The Bridge Betrayed, Michael Sells' finely written, well-argued new book, explores the Bosnian war's religious dimension, and above all the role of Christian religious mythology in preparing the ground for genocide. Sells, the chair of Haverford College's Religion Department, does not claim that religion was the primary cause for the slaughter in Bosnia, but he does suggest that a particularly lethal religious-based ideology was used to motivate and justify the extermination of Bosnian Muslims and their culture. The Catholic and Eastern Orthodox proponents of this ideology, which he terms “Christoslavism,” conflated Slavic race and Christian religion, concluding that the only true Slavs were Christian Slavs. This made Muslim Slavs (the Bosnian Muslims) traitors to their race and the enemies of Christianity.

Sells traces the impetus and rationalization of genocide against Slavic Muslims to Serbian Christoslavic myth, which by the '80s had filtered into public discourse and the media. The central event in Serbian folklore is the Serbs' tragic 1389 defeat at the hands of the invading Ottoman army on Kosovo Field. During the ensuing five centuries of Ottoman rule, generation after generation of Serbs handed down tales, legends and songs about the Battle of Kosovo Field and the martyrdom of the fallen Serb leader, Prince Lazar.

In the 19th century, Serbian nationalists turned Lazar into an explicit Christ figure,



The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia

By Michael A. Sells

University of California Press
244 pp. \$19.95

who was betrayed and murdered by a Muslim Judas. In this version of the Good Friday story, Ottoman Turks assume the role of Christ killers, just as the Jews do in anti-Semitic tradition. The Slavic Muslims become the symbol of the traitor within: Serbs who betrayed their nation and race to join the enemy, the Islamic Turks. According to legend, Lazar (and the Serbian nation) cannot rise from the dead until all the descendants of his killer are purged from the Serbian people. Thus, the revenge of Lazar-Christ's death becomes a sacred act.

As riddled as the myth is with historical contradictions, its underlying motifs surface throughout Serbian literature and church folklore. The Muslim is portrayed as "the other," the anti-Christ, the heretic, the pervert, the sadist. Slavic Muslims, who converted to Islam, and the Ottoman Turks are made synonymous. Both are considered part of an alien, non-European race bent on destroying the Christian Slavs.

In such a context, people across Serbia readily accepted the lurid tales that Serbian nationalists and Orthodox clerics fabricated during the '80s about atrocities committed by ethnic Albanian Muslims in Serbia's Albanian-dominated province of Kosovo. In 1986, 200 prominent Belgrade intellectuals signed a petition demanding that the government stop the Albanians' "genocide" against Serbs in Kosovo. The propaganda galvanized the Serbs around a nationalist ideal, priming them to accept and support a war against Muslims and ultimately to sanction their extermination. The trumped-up charges of a genocide against Serbs in Kosovo

was turned into the rationale for the actual genocide of Muslims in Bosnia.

Sells argues that Christoslavism played much the same role in Croatia and among Bosnian Croats. It is true that many Croats, like many Serbs, harbor religious stereotypes about Muslims and long for an "ethnoreligiously" pure state. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman had that much in common from the beginning. But Sells' thesis runs into trouble when he lays too much emphasis on the religious character of the Bosnian war.

While the leadership of the Serbian Orthodox Church openly backed the Bosnian Serbs and either denied or justified their crimes, the Catholic Church hierarchy in Bosnia and Croatia as well as Pope John Paul II vocally condemned the hard-line Croatian nationalists. Sarajevo's Catholic cardinal, Vinko Puljic, became one of Bosnia's most prominent spokespersons for tolerance and multicultural coexistence. Even though individual Catholic orders and priests, especially in Herzegovina, did back the radical nationalists, ethnoreligious ideals were not the main inspiration for the actions of the Croatian extremists. And if the Croats could carry out ethnic cleansing for reasons other than an ideological Christoslavism, there must obviously have been other factors motivating the Serbs as well.

Religion-based explanations of the war in Bosnia tend to lose sight of the conflict's ultimate origin: the quest for territory and bounty. Thus when Sells refers to the hard-line regime of the Herzegovina Croats as the "Christoslavism state of Herceg-Bosna" and their army as "Christoslavism forces," he mistakenly implies that the driving ideology of the Herzegovina mafiosos and black marketers was Christianity. In fact, it was the greed of local warlords and their longing to join a greater Croatian state.

Also, as Sells duly acknowledges, the enemies of the Serb and Croat nationalists were not confined to non-Christians. Serb and Croat dissenters within the political opposition, peace movements and critical media were also ruthlessly silenced by their own communities. Although religious nationalists might (or might not) regard this kind of resistance as betrayal of faith and nation, it was not religious in origin, but rather inspired by opposition to the regimes' political goals. And as closely as the Christoslavism Serbs and Croats sometimes collaborated, the very real animosity between them (and their destruction of each other's churches) tends to undermine the notion of a united Christoslavism alliance.

Nevertheless, Sells' original, provocative thesis sheds new light on many questions surrounding the war in Bosnia. An American of Serbian descent, the author does not hesitate to assign the Serb nationalists ultimate responsibility for the destruction of Bosnia. *The Bridge Betrayed* exposes and rejects generic terms ("civil war," "age-old hatreds," and so on) that obscure the reality of what happened in Bosnia. Sells calls genocide by its name, something the world's politicians are loath to do.

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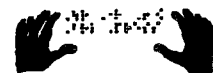
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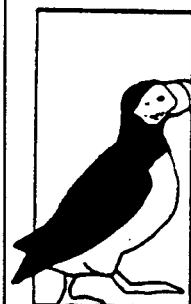
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Continued from page 40

growth of the quilt. In the past, such an exhibit would have been an irresistible target for activists; this year it raised eyebrows but went unchallenged. Aggressive sales reps, slick brochures and computerized displays hyped clinical developments that promise healthier and longer lives to people infected with the virus. But such treatments remain painfully out of reach for those who can't afford the annual price tag of \$15,000 and up.

Perhaps it's this heretofore elusive hope for a medical victory that has undermined the desperate urgency that once defined AIDS activism. Since its earliest days, the AIDS movement has experienced an evolutionary spin that has turned screaming rage into strategic negotiation, and confrontation into collaboration. Illness, weary fatigue and death have silenced many of the epidemic's original voices, and those lucky enough to remain on the front lines have had to adapt in order to survive. We've traded in our Doc Martens for Gucci loafers, turned the jobs we'd take for a while into careers, and gone from ragtag activists to consummate AIDS professionals almost overnight. Have we sold out? I don't know. It is clear, anyway, that the tactics that worked in 1987 won't work in 1996, and that what works in 1996 probably won't work in 1997. The problem is, we don't know what will work in the future. Without a game plan, agenda or vision, we're jerked this way and that by a mass culture that has finally taken an interest in AIDS.

Like virtually anything that gets the attention of a sufficient number of Americans, AIDS has become big business. Some AIDS activists criticize the quilt for gobbling up scarce resources that would be better used for care, treatment, research and more explicit forms of education. Corporate America, however, knows a good investment when it sees one. The impressive roster of Gold, Silver and Bronze corporate sponsors confirms the quilt's status as a marketing dream—as it must be if it is to survive, given the cost of such an endeavor.

Americans love to shop, and the NAMES Project made sure there was no shortage of keepsakes for visitors to take home. The National Mall lived up to its name as AIDS quilt T-shirts, sweatshirts, buttons, posters and other assorted mementos flew off the counters of prominently placed souvenir tents. Products that sold out early or were too upscale for the grassy gift shops—the \$500 “Until There's A Cure” 18-carat gold bracelet, say—could be ordered for home delivery from a chic po-mo catalog. Like thousands of other well-meaning slaves to consumerism, I waited in line to plop down my \$25 for a sweatshirt, finding solace in its rhetorical “How Many Names Will It Take?” insignia and in repeated reassurances that proceeds would help fund future displays.

Less benign were the piles of coupons from a local bar pushing “red ribbon ale” and stacks of free America Online introductory software, specially labeled for the occasion. The merchandise seemed oddly out of place at information tables where volunteers helped grieving families find the names and quilt locations of loved ones. What's next? AIDS

quilt prepaid phone cards? Actually, they had those too.

It was brash commercialism like this that made you wonder if the quilt wasn't becoming one giant sales pitch. Even the commemorative program was filled with advertisements from investment brokers promising HIV-positive people “fast cash now” for the rights to their life insurance benefits, a bottled water distributor selling self-described parasite-free drinking water, and a company selling discount caskets through a toll-free number.

It didn't go unnoticed that last month's display came on the eve of an election: “Remember them with your vote” became the weekend's mantra, as thousands of volunteers dressed in white asked visitors to sign petitions demanding leadership from our nation's next president. Organizers delivered 50,000 of the petitions to both Bob Dole and Bill Clinton on October 17th; I guess Dole can throw his away, if he hasn't already. AIDS has always had as much to do with politics as it has with health, and the scant attention given to this century's worst public health disaster during the presidential campaign underscores the dire need for high-profile reminders of the continuing epidemic in our nation's capital. But voting as eulogy?

To their credit, Bill and Hillary Clinton spent about 20 minutes touring a roped-off section of the quilt, posing for a perfect photo-op where no president had dared to before. (Presidents Reagan and Bush not only failed to show up at previous quilt displays, but fled Washington entirely to avoid confronting the epidemic they helped create.) Al and Tipper Gore were among the more than 2,000 volunteers who joined in the continuous recitation over a loudspeaker of the names of the 70,000 victims of the disease. And the usual stable of sympathetic celebrities turned out for a dizzying schedule of marches, rallies, receptions and dance parties.

Whatever its larger meaning, the quilt did seem to signify that AIDS is at last being taken seriously by a broad cross section of the public. For a moment, strangers were united in hope and remembrance. After a candlelight march from the steps of the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial reflecting pool, I stood for a while next to a gray-haired woman with a string of rosary beads wound around her hand and a crumpled photo of her recently deceased son clutched tightly to her chest. Together, we watched as people deposited their still-lit candles in makeshift pyres by the roadside and streamed back into the street, some headed towards the seductive thumping bass of beckoning circuit parties. The corporate logo-imprinted cups that had shielded the candles from the wind burst into flame and a swirl of multicolored wax ran into the street, eventually hardening in the cool fall air. The woman talked about her son's quilt panel with quiet reverence, took one last look at the candles, and hugged me. “I hope this all helps,” she said before ambling off into the darkness. I hope so too. ◀

Jeffrey L. Reynolds is Director of Public Policy for the Long Island Association for AIDS Care and a member of the New York State AIDS Advisory Council.

I N T H E E N D

How to sell an American quilt

By Jeffrey L. Reynolds

First unfurled in 1987, the AIDS quilt—like the epidemic itself—has grown by leaps and bounds with each successive D.C. display. By 1988, the original 2,000 panels had quadrupled to 8,000; by 1989, there were 11,000 panels that spanned 14 acres. With 1992's sprawling election-year showing of some 20,000 panels, the quilt had grown to 10 times its original size, forcing organizers to predict—as they had in 1989—that the enormous memorial could never again be shown in its entirety.

Proven wrong twice before, NAMES Project organizers refused to make any such prediction last month as they unfolded the quilt's 40,000 panels—bearing 70,000 names—onto an area the size of 24 football fields between the Capitol and the Washington Monument. At once horrifying and majestic, the quilt was the centerpiece of a Columbus Day weekend packed with dozens of HIV-related conferences, benefits, prayer services and other events designed to raise awareness, money and the spirits of those touched by the epidemic.

The inspiration for the quilt came during a rainy 1985 candlelight march in honor of slain San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone. NAMES organizer Cleve Jones asked marchers to write the names of fallen loved ones—AIDS cases in San Francisco had just topped the 1,000 mark—on pieces of cardboard, which were then taped to the side of the Federal Building. It was this hastily-assembled tattered patchwork of names—deployed in a distinctly political act of protest—that gave way to today's warm, fuzzy, non-threatening use of America's own colonial folk art to bear witness to, and permanently record, the tragedy of AIDS.

Like the red ribbon, the sprawling quilt has become a major vehicle for raising mainstream consciousness about AIDS without messy discussions of sex, drug use and death. Advertisements for the event in some of the nation's largest newspapers featured a sewing needle threaded with red yarn and beckoned America with the reassurance that "Not all Battles are Fought with a Sword." This direct rejoinder to the "silence=death" slogan of days gone by was a stroke of marketing genius. This year's display drew an estimated 2.1 million visitors, making it the largest AIDS awareness event in history. As people from all walks of life strolled the 21 miles of black plastic walkways that crisscrossed the memorial, a marriage between the AIDS movement and mainstream America was consummated in a three-day weekend of silent reverence and hushed solemnity, during which only a few dared to ACT UP.

Though protesters tossing the ashes of loved ones on the White House lawn or joining hands in solidarity around the Capitol may have scared a few wide-eyed tourists, things were generally quiet—in some cases, too quiet. A woefully mislabeled "Wellness Pavilion" showcased the nation's pharmaceutical companies, whose relentless profiteering has undoubtedly hastened the



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